

BONNETS *to* **Boardrooms**



Women's Stories
from a Historic College Town

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
Eugenia Poporad Vanek

BONNETS TO BOARDROOMS

This Oberlin Heritage Center publication was produced thanks to the assistance of

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past and present

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Historic College Town

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**OBERLIN
Heritage
CENTER**

Oberlin, Ohio

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*For the Oberlin women who shared their stories with
us . . . and with you.*

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FOREWORD

This volume features the recollections of fifty-two Oberlin women from a great variety of backgrounds and experiences. All were born between 1895 and 1959. Most were longtime residents of the community. Some lived in Oberlin their entire lives; others did not. Some were affiliated with Oberlin College. The group includes teachers, mothers, administrators, wives, concerned citizens, and community activists, and some were trailblazers. The stories in this book would probably not have been preserved for future generations had they not been collected as part of the Oberlin Oral History Project (see Appendix A, “Oral History in the Making,” for a summary of the project).

Included in this front matter is a map showing the location of selected places in Oberlin that are discussed in the book. The text is organized into seven chapters and includes stories that span the twentieth century. Each chapter is amply illustrated. The first three chapters depict life in Oberlin in the early twentieth century. Chapter 1, “Snapshots in Time,” presents glimpses of the town as seen through the eyes of girls growing up there. Chapter 2, “Marriage and Family,” highlights women’s dating, marriage, child-rearing experiences, and family life. In Chapter 3, “A Widening World,” Oberlin becomes a hub of activity until the Depression brings hard times.

The next three chapters focus on the changing economic conditions, attitudes, and educational opportunities that altered women’s roles within their family and in society. Chapter 4, “Strong Women in Difficult Circumstances,” documents some women’s transformations from homemakers to career professionals. Changing racial attitudes and the feminist and peace movements in the 1960s and 1970s

are addressed in Chapters 5 and 6, “The Color of Equality” and “Changing Times,” respectively. In the last chapter, “Giving Back to the Community,” women describe their many and varied efforts to make Oberlin a better place to live and work. Appendix B, “Meet the Women,” comprises brief biographies of the women whose stories are included in the publication, along with the date and name of the person who interviewed them. Appendix C, “Meet Eugenia Vanek,” outlines the accomplishments of the woman, “Geni,” who compiled and edited the interviews and penned the accompanying commentaries. Documentation for the illustrations appears in Appendix D, “Sources and Credits.” A detailed index rounds out the volume.

As you read this book, keep in mind that, as with any oral history-based project, the historical accuracy and comprehensiveness of the excerpts may be affected by individuals’ memories and the anecdotal and conversational nature of interviews. And, because oral history interviewees rarely speak in a finished form, portions of the transcribed texts used here have been lightly edited for greater readability. In some places words were added to or deleted from the original transcriptions, and some unnecessary sentences were omitted without using ellipses. Readers who wish to see the original, unedited transcriptions may do so by appointment at the Oberlin Heritage Center (OHC).

The idea for this book originated with Geni. While serving on the Oberlin Heritage Center Board from 2003 to 2005, she was fascinated to learn that the Heritage Center had a little-known but amazingly rich and extensive series of oral history interviews with Oberlin-area residents. Geni proposed producing a publication based on stories from the interviews to help make the public aware of Oberlin’s history and to publicize the Heritage Center and its good work, not only in the community but far beyond. She carefully reviewed hundreds of pages of interviews and extracted extraordinary, powerful, and heartwarming accounts of women’s varied lives. Indeed,

FOREWORD

the resultant compilation encapsulates the experiences of twentieth-century women throughout the nation.

Also key to the success of this book were the expertise and assistance of numerous other individuals. Most, like Geni Vanek, volunteered their time and talents to make this publication possible. This is wonderfully in keeping with the volunteer-driven nature of the Oberlin Oral History Project, itself, over the more than thirty years of its existence.

First and foremost, this publication would not exist if it had not been for the hard work and dedication of legions of Oberlin Oral History Project interviewees, interviewers, transcribers, and other volunteers, past and present, as well as countless other Oberlin Heritage Center volunteers and student interns over the years. Among those who played key roles in producing this volume were Charles E. Dial, Sarah MacLennan Kerr, Marlene Deahl Merrill, and Prue Richards. Ken Grossi, the Oberlin College archivist, and his staff also provided invaluable assistance. Also deserving special mention are the former chairpersons of the Oberlin Heritage Center's Oral History Committee: Marly Merrill, Dina Schoonmaker, and Priscilla Steinberg; and the staff liaisons to the committee: Pat Holsworth (genealogist and former financial assistant) and Liz Schultz (museum education and tour coordinator).

Photographs of most of the interviewees were not obtained when the interviews were conducted. Locating photographs of some of the women featured in the publication many years after they were interviewed was a considerable challenge, and in some cases it was not possible. Some of the photographs that are included in the book came from the Oberlin Heritage Center collection. Others were generously shared by the Oberlin College Archives and family members of the interviewees. Some came from yearbooks, church directories, or other sources. Still others were taken expressly for this publication.

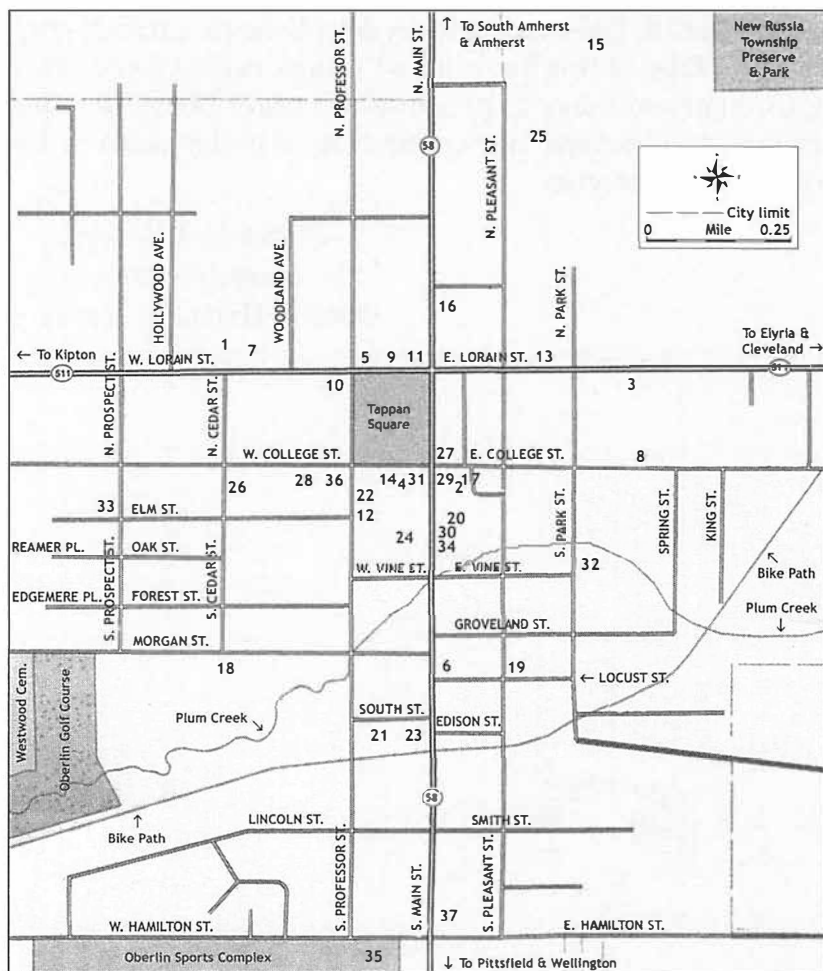
The difficulty of finding photographs of people who lived in our community in the recent past attests to the importance of

the ongoing work of the Oberlin Heritage Center in collecting, cataloguing, preserving, and sharing the community's photographs and historical documents and history.

For more information about the Oberlin Oral History Project and the Oberlin Heritage Center, please visit <www.oberlin-heritage.org> or contact the organization by mail at P. O. Box 0455, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 or by telephone at 440-774-1700. Your purchase of this book helps to support the Oberlin Heritage Center's mission: to preserve and share Oberlin's unique heritage and to make our community a better place to live, learn, work, and visit.

—*Patricia A. Murphy*
Executive Director
Oberlin Heritage Center

SELECTED SITES IN CENTRAL OBERLIN, OHIO*



* Oberlin College facilities are so numerous and so concentrated that only a few of them can be depicted at this scale.

Numbers Correspond to Sites on the Facing Page

- 1 Allen Memorial Hospital
- 2 Apollo Theater
- 3 Bardwell House (twentieth-century location)
- 4 Ben Franklin Store (site of former Haylor's Bookstore & W. E. Parker Jewelry Store)
- 5 Carnegie Library (Oberlin College; no longer a library)
- 6 Centennial School (building no longer exists)
- 7 Crane Pool (Oberlin College; no longer in service)
- 8 Eastwood School
- 9 Fairchild Chapel & Quadrangle (site of former Oberlin College Graduate School of Theology)
- 10 Finney Chapel (Oberlin College)
- 11 First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ
- 12 First United Methodist Church
- 13 Gayters' skating rink (building and rink no longer exist)
- 14 Gibson's Food Market & Bakery
- 15 Kendal at Oberlin
- 16 Langston Middle School (formerly Oberlin High School)
- 17 Martin Inn (building no longer exists)
- 18 Morgan Street reservoir (no longer functions as a reservoir)
- 19 Mount Zion Baptist Church
- 20 New Union Center for the Arts (formerly Union School)
- 21 Oberlin Community Services
- 22 Oberlin Conservatory of Music
- 23 Oberlin Depot (no longer a railroad station)
- 24 Oberlin Heritage Center
- 25 Oberlin High School
- 26 Oberlin Hospital (now a private residence)
- 27 Oberlin Inn (built in 1955 to replace former inn)
- 28 Oberlin Kindergarten Training School (one of numerous former sites)
- 29 Oberlin Savings Bank (now First Merit Bank)
- 30 Oberlin School of Commerce (one of numerous former sites)
- 31 Ohly's Drug Store (no longer a drugstore)
- 32 Park Street Seventh Day Adventist Church
- 33 Prospect School (replaced old building ca. 1960)
- 34 Rex Theater
- 35 Splash Zone Aquatic Center
- 36 Talcott Hall (Oberlin College dormitory)
- 37 Welcome Nursing Home

Oberlin history is really all of us, and all of our lives are important. The older people that we're interviewing have lived through a tremendous amount of change, and the change has been at their living level—not at as high a level as it would be, perhaps, with prominent people who make the policy. These are the people affected by history. They have lived through two world wars and a huge Depression, yet I think we could call them all survivors.

—*Mildred Arthrell, 1985*

1. SNAPSHOTS IN TIME

A Century Begins

*Picture Oberlin at the beginning of the twentieth century, as portrayed by longtime Oberlin resident **Marvyl Fields**.*

I wasn't quite five at the turn of the century. I remember that very well, because my father got me up at midnight and impressed on me that I should remember that I had lived in two centuries. They had fireworks and quite a display at midnight because it was 1900. The whistles blew and the bells rang, and they shot off fireworks and guns.



Marvyl Fields, in 1928

Oberlin was a much smaller place then than it is now. There were so few people in the town that I knew everybody and where everybody lived. The houses weren't very close together, but all neighbors were very friendly and helped each other as much as they could. If anybody was sick in a house, the neighbors came and did everything. Then, when someone else got sick, your family pitched in and helped them. We were just like one family.

Mildred Haines and **Florene Worcester** described the streets of Oberlin during this period.

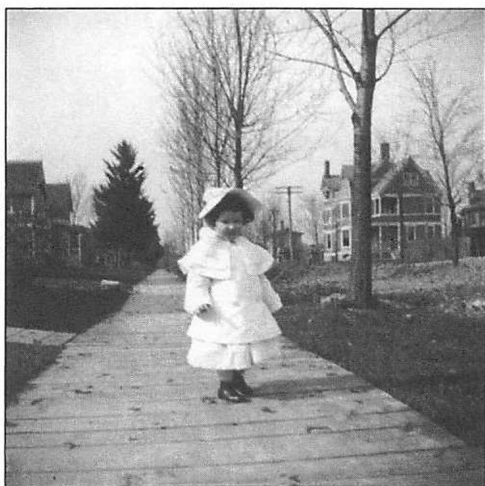
When we lived at 149 Morgan Street, the streetlights were these old carbon lights. I can remember what a joyous day it was for all the children in the neighborhood when the townspeople came to change those carbons because the stubs that were left, they would give to us. This would be like a large carbon pencil, and we could use it for drawing and

making posters. It was a most wonderful time.—*Mildred Haines*

South Main Street was a cinder road with a base of mud, so when it rained hard, you could always depend on the farmers being called out to bring their horse team to pull somebody out of the mud. Down where we lived, the big ruts were just right for us children to go and stand in our bare feet at the top of the rut and slip down to the bot-

tom of it. I'm sure we fell in more than once.—

Florene Worcester



The lack of paved roads did not deter Oberlinians from their fascination with the automobile, and soon cars shared the road with horse-drawn buggies and bicycles. The first automobile appeared in Oberlin in 1899, driven

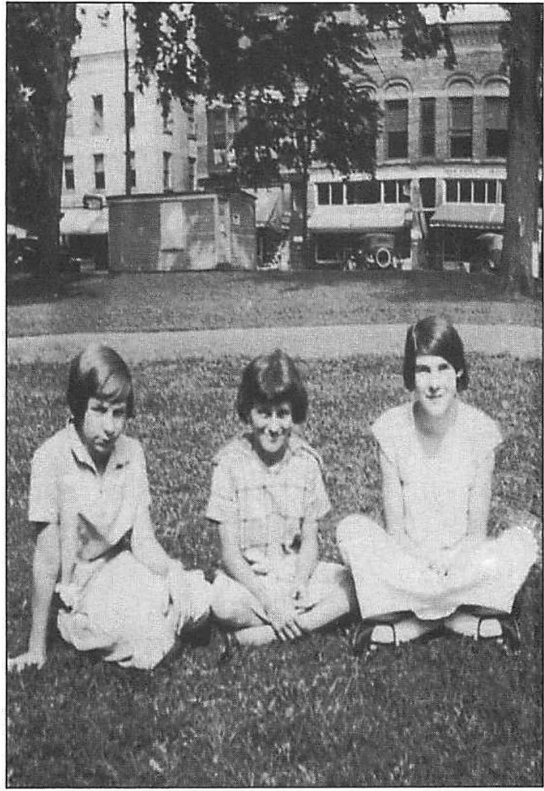


Facing page, top: In 1904 Janet Kerr, dressed in her finest, went for a family stroll on the boardwalk along muddy South Cedar Street.

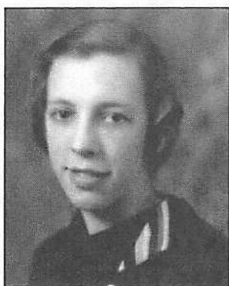
Facing page, bottom: A group of students, including Mildred Haines, posed on the steps of Prospect School in 1908.

This page, right: On a fine summer day in the 1920s Florene Worcester (right) and her sisters relaxed on Tappan Square, with North Main Street behind them.

This page, below: In the 1910s cars, wagons, carts, bicycles, and shoppers all shared the streets around Tappan Square in downtown Oberlin.



on a test run by Alexander Winton, co-owner of a Cleveland bicycle shop with Oberlinian Thomas Henderson. However, the average Oberlinian could not afford a car until Henry Ford produced the Model T in 1908. By 1927, 15 million of Ford's cars had rolled off the assembly line. Other manufacturers joined Ford to make the automobile the most popular method of transportation in and around town. **Mildred Chapin** shared her excitement about learning to drive in the 1920s. These experiences held her in good stead, for she continued to drive for seventy-two years without an accident.



Mildred Chapin, in 1930

I learned to drive a car when I was thirteen, heading north on Pyle-South Amherst Road with my mother at my side. A few trips out there and she had more confidence in me than I did. She asked me one day if I would please drive down to the racket store on North Main Street for a spool of thread for her. I was quite ap-



A 1913 open touring car owned by Mildred Chapin's father and Maurice Schubert, being driven by Mr. Schubert and painted to advertise the 1933 Window Fair.

prehensive about it. She urged me to go down Woodland, where I lived, left on Lorain, then turn right on North Main to the front of the store, then come home by way of West College to Professor to Lorain and west to Woodland. She made it sound so simple. I got home in record time and was probably rather surprised, but pleased inside, that I had made it. It was a very uneventful trip. But remember, there probably weren't ten cars on the street back then.

I don't remember what car I learned on, but I do remember that we got different cars frequently. They were always gotten with trading as little money as necessary. We never had a new one that I can recall. I know my parents had a Model T before my time, and then they had a Pathfinder, an Essex, a Saxon, a Dodge, a Moon, and a Pierce Arrow, a Willys-Knight, a Reo, and a Chevrolet; and my dad, along with Maurice Schubert, owned a Patterson. I think it was a 1913 open touring car used only for parades and fun stuff.

I was driving the Essex home from Elyria one day. I was at the top of Hale Road hill when I realized there was a wheel ahead of me going down the road. It beat me to the bottom, that's for sure. I had to get off the road, stop the wheel, go to a farmhouse, and call Oberlin for help. I always referred to that car as "Napoleon Fall-a-Part."

Some cars were more dependable than others. I guess Willys-Knights were famous for spewing oil out—that is, the vapor, smoke, and stuff. I'm not sure about Reos. It seemed they did too. But the Pierce Arrow was a novelty that my dad bought cheaply. He got it home, but we never went for a ride in it. He got rid of it soon, but it was fun to sit in the front seat. You'd think you were in a great big organ console with all these pulls and stuff.

I had a Roadmaster once, but in slippery weather it seemed as though the rear was always trying to see what the front end was doing. It was heavy, and it was hard to park it because it was as big as most of the parallel parking spaces.

*Driving in winter was especially difficult, as **Mildred Arthrell** noted.*

People who owned cars put them up on jacks in the winter. Those who did venture out needed to plank the roads.

***Marion Dudley** described the planking of roads in winter.*

If it was very muddy and it was going to freeze, they would take a sled made of just planks and pull it down the road. That would smooth out ruts, and then the cars could get through much better. That was before we built our modern roads. I think this was around the teens and twenties.



*Jennie Tucker, in
1926*

*Those without cars or buggies could rely on bicycles to traverse Oberlin's relatively flat terrain and compact area. As **Jennie Tucker** commented,*

Adults have always ridden bicycles in Oberlin. They never stopped. When they have stopped every place else in the world, people would drive by here in cars and say, "Look. See the lady riding the bicycle?" That would be my mother. My mother learned to ride a bicycle in her forties.

*Oberlin College students, faculty, and townspeople crossed paths daily. Their dormitories were often nestled among residential streets, as depicted in **Mildred Chapin's** story.*

When I was five, I went to kindergarten. We lived on West College Street. After a month of negotiating the trip from West College straight through to Elm Street, I decided to keep my eyes on my feet and act blind. I knew I could get to kindergarten without any help. But I ended up at the door of a dormitory, a couple of doors away from where I was aiming for on Elm Street. And all those big people hovered over me wanting to help. I didn't know where I was, and I couldn't even say "kindergarten."

*Though not a student, **Margaret Haylor** was lucky to find a room living with Oberlin students.*

After I graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1919, I came to Oberlin to teach sewing and cooking. I got off the train at the station and walked west on Morgan Street from Main Street. I remember seeing the statue of General Shurtleff, pointing up toward the college. I remember that very distinctly.

My friend met me at the station, and I stayed with her in Professor Moore's house on Elm Street for a couple of nights until I could find a place. I went around town from house to house asking if they had a room available. I stayed in an annex on Vine and Professor. It was an annex for college girls, but Mrs. Shepherd said she had a room, so I took it. Because I wasn't a student, I didn't have to obey rules, and the girls in the house all came to my room to study after lights were out at ten o'clock.



General Giles Shurtleff, a Civil War hero, stands near the corner of South Professor and Morgan Streets, in front of one of his former homes. His statue has left an indelible impression on generations of Oberlinians; and occasionally, when the house served as a dormitory for Oberlin College women in the mid-twentieth century, it was the object of many a collegiate prank.

Commerce in the Heart of Town

*Shopping consisted of going from store to store along College and Main Streets. Each store specialized in a particular item. For example, **Marvyl Fields** spoke of buying groceries from the baker, the butcher, and the greengrocer.*

I think that the things that impressed me about uptown in Oberlin were the bakeries, where you could always smell hot, fresh bread on Main Street. Everybody bought their bread from the bakery. A loaf of bread sold for five cents. If you went to a bakery and got a loaf of warm bread and hurried home with it, the butter would just go all through it. It was so good.

You could go to the meat market, and they would cut your meat like you wanted it. I always thought that was so nice. Now, you have to buy a little package and take what



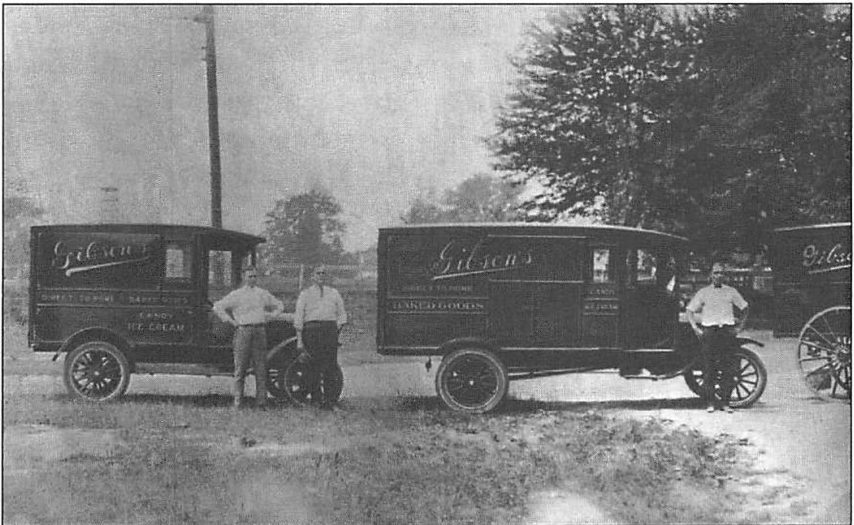
Their meat market at 16 South Main Street was the pride and joy of George Bailey, Henry Hall, and H. W. Reighley, shown here in 1921.

you get. I remember my mother used to send me to get stew meat, and she'd tell me to get the "plate stew." Now, I guess they just call it a pot roast. Sometimes she'd roast it, and sometimes she'd boil it. There's a funny little bone in it, and it was less expensive than a standing rib roast. We didn't buy much meat at the stores.

There was a slaughterhouse south of town. The men would go down there when they butchered, and they'd give them the parts of chicken and animals that we called "giblets." Now, those things are sold in the store at a high price.



In the early years of the twentieth century Wright and Parsons Grocery Store did a thriving business at 27 West College Street.



Gibson's food store and market, which opened at 23 West College Street in 1905, had switched from horse-drawn delivery wagons to trucks by 1920. Although the trucks are long gone, Gibson's is still a favorite of locals and students alike.

There were grocery stores, and the men wore white aprons. I used to be fascinated because the bananas were on big stalks, and if you wanted bananas, they cut them off for you, as you wanted them. They dipped the salt out of a barrel and the sugar out of a barrel. You'd buy just how much you wanted. They also had a glass case there that was all closed up and they had candy—penny candy and five-cent candy. All the kids would go in, stand with their little noses against that case, and look at that candy.

*In time, merchants sold all types of foodstuffs in one shop. Later, chain stores, such as Kroger and A&P, competed with family-owned grocery stores. **Marvyl Field's** daughter, **Adora Godette**, witnessed these changes. However, expectations of personal service continued.*



*Adora Godette,
date unknown*

You could call up and order groceries. They had two deliveries, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If you called by a certain time, you could get the morning delivery, and if you called later, you could get the afternoon delivery. When I was young and even when I was first married, I remember I used to have groceries delivered because I didn't have a car. It could have been in the sixties that they stopped that regular route, but there was a regular route. It was a horse and wagon at first, and then it was just guys with cars.

Silent Movies and Crackling Radios

*Silent films were popular in Oberlin's two theaters, the Rex and the Apollo. In 1983 **Marjorie Parker** recalled how piano music accompanied the movies.*

At first, we didn't have talking movies but used to have a colored lady who could play the best jazz. She played



Not all was "Learning and Labor" in Oberlin. The Rex Theater, at 53 South Main Street (above, ca. 1920), and the Apollo Theater, at 19 East College Street (below, ca. 1925), were popular venues for various forms of entertainment. The Apollo outlived the twentieth century and is thriving in the twenty-first.



the same thing over and over and over through the whole movie—but when the Indians would come out, she'd get real loud and fast, and then, when it would be a love scene, she'd play real soft.

“For most Oberlinians, however, going to the movies meant going to the Apollo,” stated Oberlin historian Geoffrey Blodgett. The Apollo Theater was part of a complex built in 1914 by local businessman and gas station owner William Hobbs. In its early days it was the home of many vaudeville acts, live musical performances, and black-and-white movies. In 1928 Jerry Steel, a Cleveland film distributor and theater manager who lived in Oberlin, purchased the Apollo. Under his family’s management, the theater flourished.

*For forty-three years **Molly Ludwig** was the ticket taker and general manager at the Apollo Theater. Undoubtedly, she saw many changes in viewers’ tastes and the industry’s technology.*

At that time, we had movie matinees every day and continuously on Sunday. It cost thirty-five cents for an adult and ten cents for a child, but when the war came along in the 1940s the federal government put a tax on movie admissions, and admission for kids had to be fourteen cents.

When I started over at the theater in the 1930s, I made fifteen dollars a week. I had Friday evenings off, but I worked every Sunday and every holiday. I worked all day long. I had time off for dinner in the evening. The Campus Restaurant was right at our back door, and they'd bring food over if I didn't have anybody to relieve me. I ate in the restaurant for eighteen years. They had a wonderful chef, a black man called Johnny Johnson. Johnny would see me come in the back door, and he'd get the griddle. He wouldn't serve pancakes at that hour to anybody else, but he'd serve them to me. All I'd do is walk through the kitchen, and by the time I had my seat, my wheat cakes were ready.

*Commercial radio broadcasts began in 1920 and grew in popularity throughout the decade. Although television sets were commercially available in the twenties, they were slow to replace radios in homes, and only 9 percent of American families owned television sets by 1950. **Marjorie Parker** remembered the first time she listened to a radio.*

I remember hearing the first radio. I was at my friend's house, and her father had a radio. I remember hearing it very loud and calling Grandma. We had to wear receivers then to listen to the radio. I remember putting them up to the telephone and saying, "Grandma, that's coming all the way from Cleveland!"

*Listening to the radio became a neighborhood event, according to **Magdalene Cox**.*

In our neighborhood, we were the only ones for quite a while that had a radio, so our neighbors would come in to listen to it. Every week we had someone, sometimes two or three times a week. One of our favorite programs was *One Man's Family*. We all loved that, and *The Shadow*. There were ever so many good programs—*Fibber McGee and Molly*—and wonderful concert programs, much better than we have now.

Childhood Pleasures

*Despite the advent of radio and television, children enjoyed simple pleasures. They played outdoors, splashing in ponds and nearby creeks, sliding down the embankment of the Morgan Street reservoir, going on hayrides. In winter, Plum Creek provided a natural skating rink, but Gayters' rink was more popular. **Patricia Stetson** reminisced:*

I have been told that the outdoor skating rink may have been going as early as 1900. It was originally owned by the Gayters family. They owned the land and prepared it and flooded it. The only time it could be open was when it was

cold enough to freeze the ice. We'd pay ten cents to go all day long. There was a big potbellied stove inside the little warming room, and when you got too cold or your mittens got soaked, you just hung them on the stove. Sometimes they started on fire, but it didn't seem to bother anybody.

Diagonally across the street on the corner of Park and Lorain was Parker's Grocery Store. If you had an extra nickel, you could go over and buy enough food to keep you skating for another couple of hours, and you wouldn't even have to go home for lunch.



*Patricia Stetson,
in 1946*

To resurface the ice, Mr. Gayters would just turn the hose on and give each of us a snow shovel, and we would skate up and down with a snow shovel to smooth out the rough spots and spread the water around. Music from a recording was piped out of huge loud speakers. On Saturdays and Sundays, they had live band music.

We always knew whether or not there was skating because there was a little sign



No trace of Gayters' skating rink at 112 East Lorain Street remains, but in about 1900, when this photograph was taken, it drew Oberlinians of all ages.

on the Oberlin Savings Bank corner that would say, "Skating Today." Some years, there was no skating at all—the winter never was cold enough. That's when Mr. Gayters had such a terrible time making ends meet. So, the college and city helped him out. Then, I think it must have been in the late forties that they just closed down entirely.

Ellen Adams *had many friends in her neighborhood but viewed the entire town as her playground, with little concern for safety.*

I think growing up in Oberlin back then was idyllic. And living on Reamer Place, there were a lot of children, all about the same age, and we all just clicked. We'd go to school together, we'd come home, and then we'd all go out and play together.

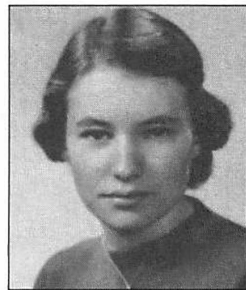
We played a lot on the Ramsey train tracks, and of course, we were told to be careful of the men who worked on the tracks and came along in their handcars. So, we'd hide in the bushes whenever we heard anyone coming. Then at dandelion time, we'd have a lot of gypsies coming up the track and over into the yard, so we had to be pretty careful at that point not to get too close to the gypsies. The gypsies got the dandelions. I don't remember that we were ever really bothered by them. Things were very different as far as safety.



Ellen Adams,
in 1932

Marianne Cochrane *had memories of equally daring escapades, even though she was twenty-two years younger than Ellen.*

We used to play hide and seek in Westwood Cemetery. That was always an experience, especially after dark because we didn't want to admit that



Marianne Cochrane,
in 1955

we were afraid to be away from the group in the cemetery. You might hide behind a tombstone, but you would want to make sure that you saw somebody else close by. I can remember playing on campus on the square downtown as we got older. It was always a great adventure to sneak out later at night and go down there and goof around a little bit.

Similarly, **Myriam Hallock** graduated from climbing trees to climbing onto buildings, perhaps foreshadowing her daring career as one of the first commercial flight attendants and, later, a cultural attaché in foreign lands.

Over on Elm Street there was a great big weeping willow tree. I remember our being in that tree one day. I was on a high branch, and Dick [Holmes] was in the "V" of a tree. This branch broke, and I fell. Fortunately, I fell



Myriam Hallock, in 1937



The majestic Carnegie Library, built in 1908 on the northeast corner of Lorain and Professor Streets, still serves Oberlin College, but now chiefly as home to the Geology Department and numerous administrative offices.

on his shoulders. Nothing happened. My mother would have died would she have known what we were doing.

We walked across the eaves of Carnegie Library. I look at it now and wonder, "How did we do that?" There was an escape ladder in the back of that building, and that is how we got to the roof. There were little niches there, and you will see the tile roof. We could sit up there with a book in the summer. We'd climb up the back, get over to the niche, and then we'd walk across the roof. It's a wonder that no one ever saw us, because we weren't trying to hide.

Mildred Haines recalled playing with her friend, Mavis Morris, in an abandoned antebellum home, once owned by abolitionists Reverend John and Cornelia Bardwell.

The Bardwell House was thought to have been a very active place during the slave days. It was a house that Mavis and I walked through with wonder. And I can state, without any equivocation, that it's true: Upstairs in the front bedroom on the west side of the house there were some



The house at 181 East Lorain Street as it looked in 2000. Mildred Haines believed that its former owners, the abolitionists John and Cornelia Bardwell, sheltered fugitive slaves in an upstairs hideaway.

THE YOUTH'S COMPANION

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THE BEST OF AMERICAN LIFE IN FICTION FACT AND COMMENT

VOLUME OF NO. 2

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JANUARY 11, 1923



Chapter Five
Two pictures in one week.

AFTER "Natie Valentine's" picture I missed an impossible task, for I'd to have to go tomorrow to the morning and pack and label vegetables for market. The bell called her soon, however, so I had to leave. I left the picture in the kitchen. I left the picture in the kitchen. I left the picture in the kitchen.



An elderly gentleman and a lady examining a book... were getting out of a photograph of the past.



THE STRAWBERRY GIRLS

By Helen Milecete Duffus

Mr. Adkins was allowed to stay in the house, but he had to go to the kitchen to get the vegetables. He was not allowed to go to the garden. He was not allowed to go to the garden. He was not allowed to go to the garden.



the thing she can't stand to do. I can't do without you. I can't do without you. I can't do without you. I can't do without you. I can't do without you.

The Youth's Companion, published weekly from 1827 until its merger with The American Boy in 1929, claimed to present "The best of American life in fiction, fact and comment." By January 11, 1923, when this issue appeared, The Youth's Companion had expanded its readership to include "All The Family," and its circulation mushroomed. A single copy cost seven cents; a yearly subscription, \$2.50.

drawers built in just like the built-in chest of drawers might be today. One time, when we were strolling through there, we took all the drawers out. We found that at the back of those drawers there was a sliding panel. A person could go from the back of those drawers out under the eaves and be concealed. So, I really think it was used as a part of the Underground Railroad.

*In contrast to these outdoor activities, reading was a popular indoor pastime in this college town where Carnegie Library served both college students and townsfolk. Families often read the Bible together, and girls enjoyed reading such books as The Wizard of Oz, Babes in the Woods, Black Beauty, and the Nancy Drew mysteries. The following anecdotes from **Magdalene Cox** and **Millie Arthrell** suggest how reading both inspired and amused.*

We were a reading family. My mother always read aloud to us on Sunday and at night. When I became the age when I liked to read aloud, I did it. Some days when it was raining, I would read aloud all day long. I would stop just for my meals. I got so I could read the whole day, and my voice didn't get hoarse. I loved to read. We took a magazine called *Youth's Companion* that came every week, I think. There was a particular group of stories in it that we always looked for—something about the old squire who lived on a farm in New England. It was so marvelous. We really felt that we were living on that old farm in New England.—*Magdalene Cox*

I'm so hooked on books today because we had so few. I can remember my mother thinking that children should have books. My father, even though he was a very loving father, didn't believe you needed books. He said, "She's already got books, so don't buy her another." There was a real big battle about that.

My mother subscribed to a couple of magazines that she thought would be good for me. One was called *The Mentor*. It was a little bit like *National Geographic*. Not

as good, but with interesting historical articles. The other magazine that was very inspiring to me, was called *The American Magazine*. This was just full of articles about well-known and not-so-well-known people. They were always success stories. There was an interview with Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford when they were at the height of their popularity as movie stars. He was the one who played Robin Hood. She was called "America's Sweetheart," and she had lovely, long curls.—*Millie Arthrell*

2. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The Path to Marriage

*Most women at the turn of the twentieth century expected to marry. **Mary Joy's** path to marriage was set when, as a teenager, she started to date an employee at her family's farm.*



Mary Joy, in 1941

My father decided that he needed additional help on the farm. He engaged a series of young men to work there. Because it was a dairy farm, these men actually lived in our home. One of these men was Bill Joy, and anytime the family went anyplace, he went too. He really was part of the family. When I was sixteen or sixteen and a half, I became aware of him as he began to give me some special attention. Mostly we went to church or 4-H Club things. Occasionally, we would go uptown on Saturday night, sit in the car, enjoy a pint of ice cream, and watch the people go by. When the stores closed at nine o'clock he would take me home.

Bill was so sure he wanted to marry me that I never really chose and just accepted him. The summer before my senior year in high school we were in an automobile accident. I was unconscious for three or four days and had some other injuries. Bill was so attentive during this time that I think this probably sealed the fact that we would marry eventually. I sometimes wondered, had we not been in the accident, would we have ever married?

*Among those who pursued higher education, some viewed college as a place to meet a husband. **Gertrude Jacob,***

registrar and executive secretary of the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin College in the 1950s, described the relationship between the "Theolog" men and the women enrolled in its affiliated undergraduate program, the Schauffler School of Religious Social Work.

The Quadrangle [behind Fairchild Chapel on West Lorain Street] became the first coeducational dormitory, but not in quite the way that present coeducational dormitories exist in Oberlin. But we did have both the Schauffler girls and the Theolog men in the same dormitory. There were no married students, but some of the Schauffler girls became brides of Theolog men. I don't believe any of that happened, though, until the girls either graduated or dropped out; they didn't continue after marriage. It was a good matrimonial atmosphere.



Gertrude Jacob, in 1958

*Other women, such as **Marjorie Parker**, viewed college as a diversion before she married her high school sweetheart.*

All I wanted to do was get married. But I went to Oberlin Business School because my father made me. He looked at me and said, "Marjorie, where do you want to go to school next year? Do you want to go away to college? Do you want to go to Oberlin College, or do you want to go to Oberlin Business College?" The Business College was quicker, so I went there. I learned shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping, and then I got married. We had a jewelry store, so I kept all the books.



Marjorie Parker, in 1924

*Although socializing among different races and religions may have been tolerated in Oberlin, dating between them was typically frowned upon. **Margaret Smith**, an African American, focused on this social taboo.*

The college had a V-12 [Navy College Training Program] group here. They wouldn't send any black guys here because they didn't want them talking to any girls. They had all these white sailors, and so what did the white sailors do? They tried to date all the black girls in the town. But the girls' mothers didn't approve. So, I asked my mother how she would feel. She was from Nashville, and she said she wouldn't particularly like it, but if the sailors cared enough to come to the house and liked us enough to walk



Margaret Smith, in 1948

way out to where we lived on Follett Street [now Lincoln Street], and if they came to the house to pick us up, it was okay. Well, we weren't really ready to date anyway, but I still remember my mother saying it would depend on whether those white sailors might try to use us.

*Marrying outside one's religion was also discouraged, according to **Marion Kelly**, a Protestant.*



Groups of V-12 trainees caused quite a stir when they arrived at the Oberlin Depot. This scene took place on July 19, 1943.

My uncle Dwight was the second son of my grandmother, who raised her kids over on Elm Street. He was a party boy. He fell in love with an Irish Catholic dancer I think he met in Toledo. He also drank. I don't know whether he drank a lot, but he evidently must have drunk something, for my grandmother disinherited him. Another reason he was disinherited was that he married a Catholic. In our family an Irish Catholic was about the final blow to a Protestant background. When I married an Irish Catholic, Ralph Kelly, this was really something.



Marion Kelly, in 1939.

Babies, Bumps, and Bruises

*When **Minnie Rucker** was young, children were born at home and attended by midwives.*

As a child I lived with my grandmother, who was a nurse and a midwife. If someone needed her during the night, she'd say, "I'll be there." I would wake up and ask if I could go along.

*In the early 1900s death was a daily reminder of the precariousness of life. Anywhere from 10 to 30 percent of children died during their first year of life, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Marvyl Fields**, one of seven children, lost two brothers in childhood. Here she comments on the availability of health care in Oberlin.*

If the sickness or illness was real extreme, there were nurses that came into the home and helped. They were not trained. They hadn't been to school, so it was something they sort of picked up. I know because my sister-in-law, Etta Tucker, was a nurse. Doctors didn't have offices, they just came to your house. When doctors started having offices, and people had to go to them, it cost only a \$1.50 to go to the doctor.

*Even if a child survived birth and infancy, illness and even death lurked nearby, often due to poor sanitary conditions and infectious diseases. A common cause of illness and death was typhoid fever. **Carrie Pease** spoke of her personal experience at the age of seventeen with typhoid, probably contracted from tainted well water on her family's farm in nearby Pittsfield.*

Father got sick and died on August 24, 1909. My brother, my two sisters, and I were all sick at the same time. There were several others in town who had typhoid, and no one seemed to know where it came from or how it happened.

One after the other of us went down. Finally, my mother had three nurses in the house at the same time, and they went across the street for food and lodging when they were off duty. They were all out of Cleveland. I don't remember whether they came out under the hospital's direction, but we didn't go to the hospital.



*Carrie Pease, in
1944*

The food for typhoid had to be a bland liquid, and we were warned to not swallow seeds or anything that was roughage. When we began to lose our hair in the siege, we all hoped we'd get curly hair when it came back in. I became completely bald, and I didn't wear a wig. They didn't wear wigs then. No decent person wore a wig! When I was at home, of course, I didn't wear anything on my head, but when I went to school or was outdoors I wore a hat. I remember that hat. It was a felt hat with a broad brim on it. I think it must have settled down over my ears because it didn't show very much of my scalp. I don't think anyone laughed or teased me; everyone was sympathetic with my problem.

With so few physicians, pharmacists played an important role in giving medical guidance and suggesting the use of patent medicines. Common treatments included blowing

*sulfur down sore throats, drinking a castor-oil-and-root-beer cocktail for constipation, and rubbing Sloan's Liment on aching joints. Home "remedies" for disease prevention were also common. **Mildred Haines** described two of them.*

My father had rented a bicycle to see if I could learn to ride before he purchased one for me. Our driveway was made of cinders, and when I was practicing—I was about four or five years old—I fell off and hurt my wrist terribly. I had quite an abrasion. The hired hand we had at that time said, "Well, I know exactly what to do for that wrist." She ran into the house, brought out hot coals on a



*Mildred Haines,
in 1920*

fire shovel, and held my wrist over them to draw the pain out. This was her remedy. It made such a deep impression on me that I've never forgotten it, because this remedy was worse than the wound itself. I suppose it may have drawn some of the inflammation out, but to me it was just torture instead of a remedy.

One of my brothers in later years made the remark, "Mother never understood any illness that good food wouldn't correct."

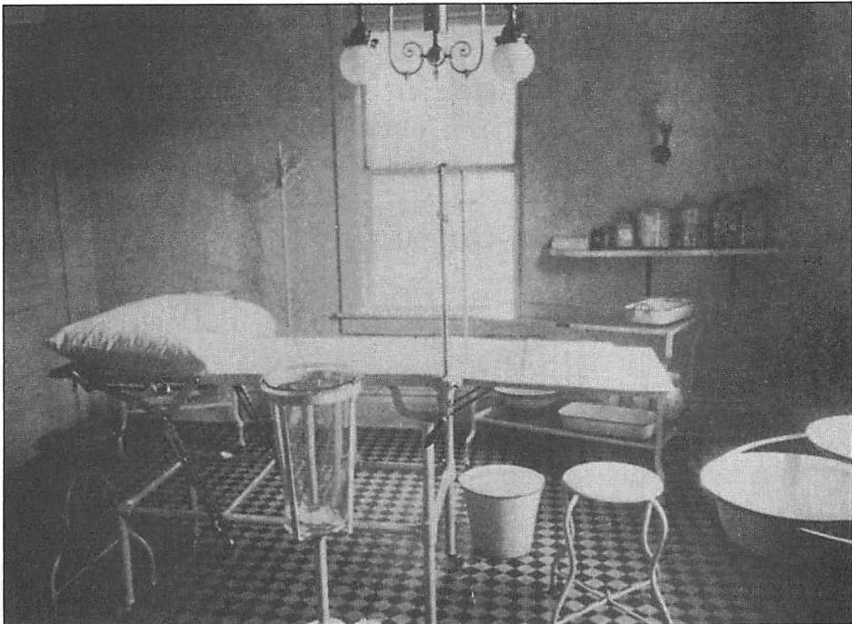
One of her remedies was really an anathema to me—an asafetida bag. I'll warrant that you don't know what that is! It was considered to be a preventative or disinfectant to keep us from getting colds and pneumonia and things like that. Mother took a little piece of this asafetida, which was really an extracted gum from a plant [*Ferula assa-foetida*], and she'd sew that up in a little cloth bag that we had to wear around our neck. While we were outdoors playing it was all right. But on a warm day when you were in school with lots of people around you, the bag would heat up and give off the most vile odor.

Between 1907 and 1925 the house at 21 South Cedar Street served as the town's infirmary, surgery center, and morgue.



This spacious house at 21 South Cedar Street, converted from a family residence in 1907, served as Oberlin's first hospital.

An operating room in the South Cedar Street medical facility.





Allen Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1925 at 200 West Lorain Street, is one of several Spanish-style structures in Oberlin designed by Cass Gilbert. Portions of his architectural design can still be spotted, even though multiple additions have dwarfed the original building.

Marvyl Fields brought her injured son there after a train hit him. Thankfully, he survived.

I have four children, one son and three daughters: Leroy Jr., Adora, Ruth, and Faith. One son was plenty! Leroy was so mischievous and had so many escapades. He had a terrible accident with a train and almost lost his life. The train dragged his bicycle for a number of feet. When they pulled him from underneath it, they saw that he had hurt his head real bad, cut it all up and tore a piece out of his scalp. He was in just terrible condition. He was rushed to Oberlin Hospital, which was in a house on Cedar Street at the time. Leroy was one of the first patients to be moved two blocks to Allen Memorial Hospital when it was built in 1925.

Dr. Trufant, who had been in the service, had recently come to Oberlin. He looked at Leroy and said he had seen many cases of soldiers who were in worse condition and that he would operate, which he did. We were always

eternally grateful to him because Leroy's head was in terrible condition.

Hearth and Home

*Women in this era had primary responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children. Without today's modern appliances and consumer goods, homemakers toiled to keep the home running smoothly. **Magdalene Cox** described her mother's tasks on the family's 67-acre farm, located 2 miles southwest of Oberlin on Quarry Road.*

My mother did lots of canning. She canned all the vegetables that we raised in our garden. She dried corn. That was the only thing that she didn't can. She canned lots of tomatoes, beans, and peas. She also made cottage cheese, which was the most delicious cottage cheese I've ever eaten. In fact, after I left home and bought my first cottage cheese from the store, I thought that it just wasn't worth eating. I don't know how she made it. We did very well with things that we made at home. In fact, as far as food was concerned, we were self-sufficient.



*Magdalene Cox,
in 1925*

My mother also made lye soap that was very strong. I think nobody would want to use it now because it is too hard on the skin. But she made all of our soap on our kitchen stove. We also made our own butter. We had one of those circular barrels turned sideways, that you just rotated until the butter came. You could tell by the sound it made when the butter had finally come.

In addition to the time-consuming duties of running a household, Magdalene's mother raised turkeys to boost the family's income.

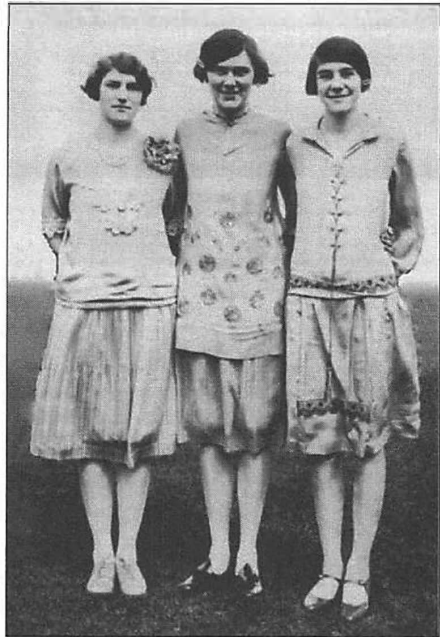
It's an odd thing about turkeys: They look strong, but they are very delicate. Mama had to give each of them a pill to keep them from having worms. She would hold their heads

and press lightly on their necks so they had to open their mouths to breathe, and then she'd put the pill down their throats. They had to be brought in when it was raining. We would go out and drive them into the brooder house. She had to keep the temperature at a certain degree there all the time. That is how we finally paid off the mortgage on the farm—with turkeys. They were very demanding, though, for you had to be home all the time.

*The labor of children was often integral to daily functioning within the home. **Magdalene's** recollection of her chores brought back fond memories.*

One of my chores was to keep the wood box filled. We had a wood stove and used a great deal of wood, so every night when I came home from school that was the first thing I did. Then I would gather the eggs. We had chickens, always. An additional chore that I didn't really have to do but loved was helping my father feed the cows at night. Sometimes I would do a little milking. I loved to be out in the cow barn at night when my father would go out for the last feeding. The cow's breath smelled so sweet, and the smell of hay was so nice. It was so nice and warm, and I just felt so secure and good.

*Like their counterparts in the country, children who lived in town were expected to do chores. **Mildred Haines** and **Marvyl Fields** were responsible for providing childcare, sewing, and cooking.*



Clearly, not all was drudgery for Oberlin's children. Florene Worcester (right) and her sisters are all in their finery in this 1925 photograph.

I had one older brother, Lester. I was the second, and then I had three younger brothers—which meant that I did a lot of things to help my mother. On Saturday mornings my job was to mend the boys' stockings. In those days we wore long black stockings, and they had ways of falling down and getting great big holes in the knees.—*Mildred Haines*

I had to help with the dishes, and I hated this. There were younger children in my house who always needed to be looked after, so I guess I felt like I was their mother. My mother was a dressmaker, so I had to learn to sew and embroider, and to cook too. I learned very early to cook, and I got so I could cook like mother. She made delicious pies, but her cakes were never as good as mine.—*Marvyl Fields*

*Large families were more common than they are today. In the United States, the average number of children per family was 3.8 in 1900. Households remained large until the 1950s, before dropping and leveling off to approximately 2 children per family from 1972 to 2000. Thus, many families often hired domestic help. The families of **Florene Worcester** and **Mildred Haines** were among them.*

My mother delivered each of her children in her home. At the time a child was born she had a black lady in for a couple of weeks to do the cooking and house cleaning and taking care of the baby.—*Florene Worcester*

My mother always had help in the home. You know, in those days you didn't have maids, you had hired girls, and they were really a part of the family. I can't remember a time when we didn't have some helper at home. There were five of us children, and in those days everything was done from scratch.—*Mildred Haines*

*Adding to housekeeping demands was the custom of formal entertaining in the home. **Jane Nord**, wife of Nordson Corporation cofounder Eric Nord, relied on Mary Evans to prepare for dinner parties with Eric's business associates.*



Jane and Eric Nord and their five children, ca. 1963–1964.

Mary Evans used to be the cook for Head Start. I loved her. She raised our children with me. She would come five days a week and stay from morning until four o'clock. Mary would help me prepare for company, and the preparations seemed very difficult. It was a lot of work. I'd get awfully upset beforehand. I was really, honestly, a basket case. I'd worry that I hadn't done it right or that I hadn't invited the people I should have asked. I had all these concerns, but once it got going, I enjoyed it. I loved meeting interesting people, including Japanese, Italian, and French guests.

*Oberlin College students also helped in the home. One was **Dorothy Smith**, who was able to earn money for tuition, room, and board.*

I said that I wanted to go to Oberlin and that I wouldn't consider anything else. Of course, it was really expensive for a minister's daughter, but I came. I was admitted, and the college worked out room arrangements for students who needed financial help. I had a room job with a conservatory wind professor during my freshman year in 1925. I did the dishes and some babysitting. They had two small

children and lived down at 241 Oak Street. I ate at Talcott Hall that year. I know I lost ten or fifteen pounds because of the long walks back and forth.

*Other families hired help from the African American community. **Ellen Adams** reminisced:*



*Dorothy Smith,
in 1930*

My mother taught at the Oberlin Conservatory. She was allowed to teach 7/8ths time so she could be home in the afternoon. And we had the most wonderful African American woman who came to the house when I was pretty small. She said she'd try us, and she was there for almost twenty-five years. Dear old Elizabeth Hill. She was called "Lizzie," and she was born in slavery. She was the salt of the earth.

She'd walk up from South Pleasant Street, up Vine Street, then Forest and Prospect up to our house on Reamer Place, walking every day both ways. She'd open up our back door at 6:30 in the morning, and was always singing when she came in. My room was right over the back door, so I could tell when Lizzie came in. She'd stay and babysit with me quite a bit because of all the recitals at the conservatory my parents had to attend. And she insisted on sitting on the stairs to the second floor because she heard of children being kidnapped from second story windows. This was long before the poor Lindbergh case.

***Ursula Stechow** grew up in Germany and arrived in Oberlin in 1940 with her family. When she wished to hire an African American babysitter so that she could return to school to finish her bachelor's degree, she encountered some opposition.*

I entered Oberlin College on two-and-a-half years of credit from a German university. Had I known what I was in for, I probably would not have had the courage. I worked like crazy! I also knew I would need help for my

senior year. So someone sent me to Mrs. Fields—Adora's mother. She guided me to the large Hoffman family with something like ten children. She knew that one of them, Gertrude Hoffman [later Gibbs], had just graduated from high school.

I had been told before, "You Europeans should never hire Negro help. You don't know how to handle them. You are either too nice or too tough. You haven't grown up with them, and that makes a difference." So the first thing I said to Gertie when she came was, "They told me I shouldn't hire you, so if I make any mistake, will you please tell me?" That is how it all started, and it turned out to be absolutely wonderful.

Soon afterward Gertrude asked whether she could take Barbara, who was three or four at the time, to a mother-daughter dinner at her Negro Baptist church. "Of course, you could!" I said. So, she made her plans, bought material that I can still see: light blue with little white bows, and she made princess-style dresses for Barbara and for herself. And off they went, our little seventeen-year-old "mother" with her very white child. They had a lovely time, and Barbara never noticed any difference, I am sure.

*Some younger African Americans came to resent white families employing their mothers and grandmothers for housekeeping, babysitting, or cooking, as these jobs were too reminiscent of past subservient roles. **Marion Kelly** remarked:*

I think that thirty- and forty-year-old black men and women professionals very much resent that their mothers worked for faculty members and white women and took care of white women's kids. However, I think some of them have really gotten over it because they realize those were the times. It was wrong, but then there were white single mothers too, who did do housework for people or who took care of their kids, but this got stereotyped to the black community.

*Although married women had household help, they remained responsible for their home and their family during the 1930s and 1940s. **Mary Joy's** attitudes were typical of women during that era.*

In that period, more mothers were staying home to raise children. I didn't feel at that time that I had any sellable skill. It was important for me to be here for the children—more important than our having more money. I was busy making the most of what we had by trying to live or cook frugally, doing a lot of home sewing, and being economical in all the things I undertook.

Faithful Families

*As the heart and soul of their families, many mothers conveyed a strong faith in God to their children. **Magdalene Cox** was moved by her mother's personal expression of faith.*

Every Sunday afternoon my mother read the Bible. Every night she would get out the Bible, then kneel down by her rocking chair and pray. She said beautiful prayers. I wish I could pray the way she did. You knew that they were just as sincere as could be. They were very simple prayers but



This class at Prospect School, photographed in 1944, reflects the diversity of Oberlin families.

really beautiful because they came from the heart. She just asked and thanked the Lord. She felt so thankful for everything that she had, and she wanted to live as close to the Lord as she could. I think she did. I always thought that my mother was one of the best Christian persons I ever knew. Her prayers just made me feel inadequate because I felt I was so far from what she was. But, they also made me feel very secure—just a wonderful feeling of being close to God when she was praying.

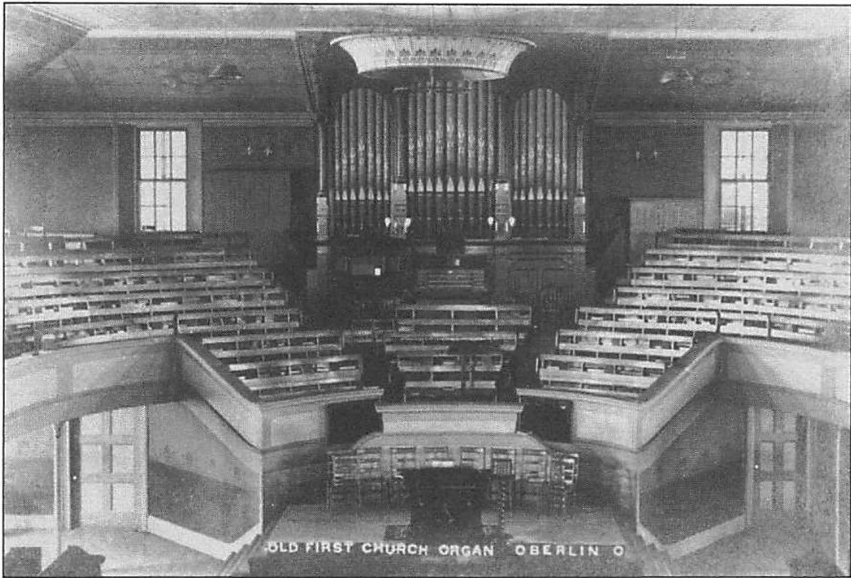
Minnie Rucker's grandmother expressed her faith through the singing of Negro spirituals.

Grandma was a great church worker, they say, and she was a shouter like me. I got that emotional part from my grandmother. They say that she used to shout through the day. I used to ask her, "What's wrong, Grandma?" She'd say, "I'm just happy with the Lord." I'd lie in bed, and my grandmother would wake me singing a song, "Hush, hush. Hush." And I'd say, "I'm not saying anything." But she continued to sing the Negro spiritual, "Somebody is calling your name. Hush, hush. Somebody's calling your name, oh, my Lord, oh, my Lord, what should I do?"

Oberlin's Christian traditions were evident in its public schools as well as in the home. As a student and later as a teacher, Adora Godette prayed and read from the Bible in her classroom.

Our teacher read us a chapter from the Bible every day, and we all said the Lord's Prayer along with the Pledge of Allegiance. In 1960 I was still doing the Lord's Prayer in my classroom. Even when we had a snack at school, we had the little kids say, "Thank you for the world so sweet. Thank you for the food we eat. Thank you for the birds that sing. Thank you God for everything." We used to do this even when we'd have milk and crackers. We'd make the kids all bow their heads.

Oberlin's first church, the Congregational Church (now The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ) was the



Today's worshippers in the historic First Church, on the corner of Main and Lorain Streets, might not recognize its interior in this ca. 1900 postcard.

*largest building west of the Appalachian Mountains when it was constructed in 1844. By the turn of the twentieth century Oberlin also contained Catholic and Episcopalian houses of worship, as well as Baptist and Methodist churches. By 1950 even more denominations, ranging from Lutherans to Seventh Day Adventists, were represented. **Marvyl Fields** observed the establishment of churches, including Mount Zion Baptist and Rust United Methodist, that ministered to predominantly African American congregations.*

As there got to be more black people here, they began to feel that they'd like a church of their own. Haven't we always wanted something to ourselves? Mount Zion started from just a prayer meeting where you pray and sing. I know people used to pray a long prayer, a real long prayer. They don't do that so much anymore, but they'd just sing. No music, no instruments, you just sing. They were hard-working people, and this was their only form of relief from the tension of hard work. And people worked hard; you



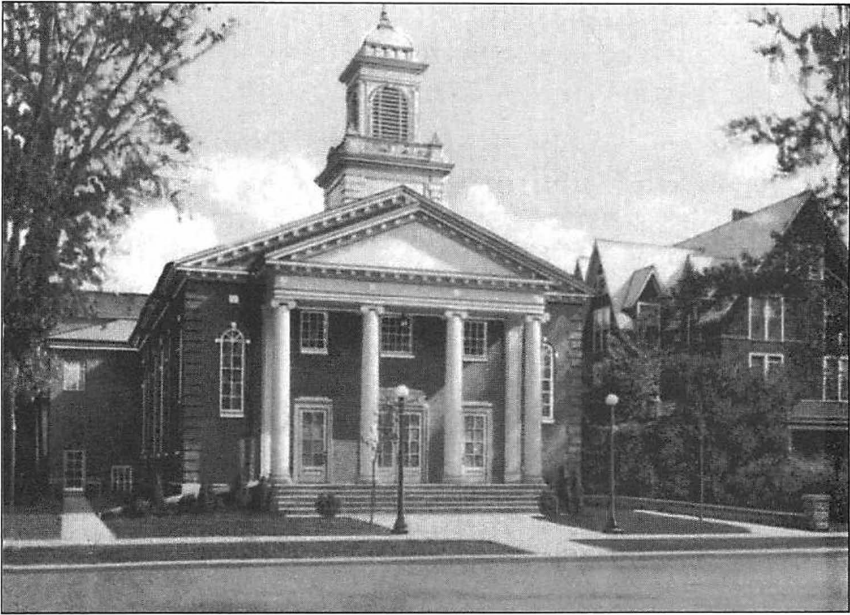
Mount Zion Baptist Church, built in 1955 at 185 South Pleasant Street, serves a predominantly African American congregation.

don't know how hard people worked. Your daddy could tell you how hard people worked once upon a time for a small amount of money.

We didn't have money to pay ministers, so when they could get something better they'd leave. Back then we had the seminary to fall back on, the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, they called it. The school was anxious to have its students get into the field and actually use their knowledge and earn a little money too. So, it wasn't hard to get ministers who hadn't even graduated yet.

Mildred Chapin described her religious education experience at the Methodist Church.

We went to the Methodist Church Sunday School after we'd gotten past the sandpile-and-sticker stage. We were challenged to learn the books of the Bible, and for that we were given a bookmark made of seven narrow ribbons stitched together at the top in rainbow colors. We were



The First United Methodist Church of Oberlin, at 45 South Professor Street, has welcomed worshippers since 1928, although the congregation itself dates back to the 1830s.

also to answer roll call in our class with a Bible verse. Very often, we'd forget through the week to look up a verse and learn it, so someone would always use the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept."

Mildred continued to participate in worship services and teach in the church's Sunday School:

By now I was practicing hymns for music lessons, as I was supposed to be the Sunday school pianist. They tried to tell me a week ahead, but if they forgot, you can be sure we sang "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." That one they knew I could handle without any warning.

I also assisted teaching Sunday School, but with the same materials I had when I was young. I didn't feel that it took much to teach it. Our Sunday School did not do all that much for helping develop a concept of God and Jesus, or what that would mean to us. Learning the books of the Bible certainly didn't do it. I wish I could have known

and presented the joy of a personal relationship with God and made the stories have substance and meaning for these children and my own.

*Regardless of religious training, the faith of individuals such as **Adora Godette** included a strong belief in the will of God.*

When we were children, it was “Jesus loves me; this I know.” You know, all those Jesus songs. Now, I believe that God is the higher being. I’m not saying that I don’t have some bad habits that I need to break. I like to play bingo two or three times a week, just to get out. It’s really my only recreation. My mother says she doesn’t think that’s right, but I do it anyway. But, I don’t drink, I never did. I’ve never smoked. I don’t know how to swear, and I don’t chew. You know, we’ve had a lot of problems, but I’ve always had faith that I could do the things I needed to do. So I’ve developed this kind of philosophy: I have faith that things will turn out the way they are supposed to, not particularly the way I wanted them to. If you really believe, and if it’s in God’s plan for you, this will come about.

I believe things happen to people according to God’s plan. Now that Mother is so ill, we say, “Not my will but Thine be done.” We don’t say, “God make her well.” We say, “If it is your will to make her well, then we accept this as His will.” But if she is going to pass on we don’t sorrow, because it’s part of the plan. Everybody has a plan; I don’t know when mine is going to be over. I’ve been able to buck a lot of adversities because I believe whatever is to be will be.

3. A WIDENING WORLD

A Hub of Activity

*Each fall, residents of Oberlin welcome the hustle and bustle of returning college students, as **Mildred Haines** described.*

In those days Oberlin College opened in about the middle of September. Most of the students arrived by train, on the New York Central line. This was really quite an event, not perhaps for the older people of the village, but for the younger ones. The boys, and that included my brothers, would go down to meet the train with their little express wagons, and they would pick up extra pennies by carrying the suitcases to the various dormitories. For the girls, it was interesting to see how the young ladies were dressed, for in those days, everybody had a new suit for the fall. It was just like a fashion parade.

*The Toledo, Norwalk, and Cleveland Line of the New York Central Railroad, also known as the Southern Division, transported students and faculty of diverse backgrounds into Oberlin. Similarly, passengers from Oberlin could switch to an eastbound train to Cleveland or a westbound train to Chicago, thus expanding expectations and opportunities for its citizenry. **Jennie Tucker** rode the “express” train, known as the “Plug,” to her job in Cleveland.*

There were five trains each way by the time I went to work at Burrows Book Store in the 1920s, and I commuted to work on the Plug. I think it started in Toledo for part of the time, and after a while it started in Norwalk. As time passed, it came to be much more important as a baggage carrier than as a person carrier. So it took longer on the

way, starting earlier from here, and it made more stops. I think, when I started working, it left Oberlin at 6:26 in the morning. I arrived in Cleveland about twenty minutes of eight. I was allowed to start work at Burrows at eight o'clock.

*In addition to the railroad, electric streetcars came into the center of town and expanded the network of connections. The distinctive green streetcar was part of the Cleveland, Southwestern, and Columbus Railway, the largest interurban, light-rail system in Ohio at one time. Despite initial concerns over the expansion of the interurban line into Oberlin, it became a favorite mode of transportation to the nearby towns of Pittsfield and Wellington to the south, Norwalk to the west, and Elyria to the northeast of Oberlin. Its low fares, multiple stops throughout Oberlin, and frequent schedules stimulated its popularity. **Ellen Adams** noted that it also provided convenient transportation to Cleveland.*

My mother was quite a singer. In fact, she was a soloist at the Old Stone Church in Cleveland for years, and she'd walk over to College Street and take the interurban in to



This 1907 postcard shows an interurban electric streetcar awaiting passengers at the northwest corner of Main and College Streets.

the church and back on Sunday. And that's the way it went. Oh, that interurban was wonderful.

Mr. [William] Caskey was a farmer. You know about the road that's in his name [Caskey Drive]. It was all farmland across the street, and we'd go there for Thanksgiving. The interurban ran right by the barn, and Uncle Will would have to leave Thanksgiving dinner at certain points to be sure that his cows were all right. Also, the interurban would stop at his barn to pick up his cans of milk, and then deliver them into Cleveland.

*By 1930, increasing pedestrian and automobile traffic began to impede the streetcars' right-of-way. **Mildred Haines** added that competition for riders from bus lines hastened the demise of the streetcar in Oberlin.*

There were streetcars and buses both. Of course, my father was one of those who encouraged the continuance of the streetcars. When I was first teaching [in the Shaker Heights, Ohio, schools] I came home one weekend on the bus. My father said, "Why did you take the bus instead of the streetcar?" I said, "I saved five minutes." His query was, "What are you going to do with those five minutes?"



A bus strike in 1945 filled the platform at the Oberlin Depot with students awaiting trains to take them home for their winter holiday.



Traveling to and from Cleveland by bus became more common as train service declined in the 1930s and 1940s.

*Despite its relatively small size, Oberlin appeared cosmopolitan when compared with the surrounding area. It offered shopping, dining, and entertainment. **Helen Johnson's** family made weekly trips from Kipton, a village 5 miles to the west-southwest, to shop in Oberlin.*



Helen Johnson, in 1933

I was born and raised on a farm about 5 miles outside of town. The big event of the week when I was a child was driving into Oberlin on Saturday night. We got the family groceries, the staples that we couldn't raise on the farm. And then, when we were all through with the grocery shopping, Dad would park the car as close as he could to the corner on East College Street and South Main. There was an Isaly's store there, and the big treat of the week was that we always got ice cream cones.



Today, as in this 1935 photograph, the south side of the easternmost block of West College Street is a principal component of Oberlin's east-west commercial axis.

An inn has stood on the northeast corner of Main and College Streets since 1833, when Oberlin was founded. This brick structure, the third incarnation of the Inn, served from 1868 until 1955, when it was replaced by a two-story motel-like building. Identifiable in this 1934 image is the popular Sugar Bowl restaurant.



Places to dine were abundant in Oberlin as busy residents sought more meals outside the home. "Oberlin always did feed," Adora Godette remarked, as she named several restaurants.

When I was a kid, there was a store called the Sugar Bowl [at 7 North Main Street]. They had sodas and everything sweet there. This guy that had the Sugar Bowl had a little truck, and he used to go around and ring the bell. He had ice cream on his truck, and they still do that! I remember the Sugar Bowl because it had these big fans that just went around. They had the metal, wrought-iron chairs. The Sugar Bowl was very popular. And you could buy a nickel's worth of candy that would last you almost a week.

We had several restaurants in Oberlin. We used to take the kids down to Gibson's [at 23 West College Street] on Sundays for creamed chicken. They had the best creamed chicken on biscuits. They didn't sell any groceries at all. It was just a restaurant and a bakery shop, and they had booths along the side.

The drug stores—three of them—had fountains, so you could get ice cream. Then there was Annie Mason's Tea Room downtown at 52 South Main. She had the best food! It was homemade—real home cooking. Lots of people used to get what they call meal tickets, where you paid a week ahead and when you went to eat, they punched your ticket. You'd pay ten dollars a week.

Faculty lectures, concerts at the Conservatory of Music, and other college-sponsored events enriched the lives of Oberlin residents. The Cleveland Orchestra performed regularly. Its arrival in town by train made an impression on Adora.

I remember seeing the Cleveland Orchestra members get off that train when they were going to play at the college. They'd come down our street because we lived on South Main then, and they'd file down the street carrying their instruments. They didn't get a taxi or anything like that, they just walked to the conservatory.

*The college also brought dignitaries to town. For example, Eleanor Roosevelt was the keynote speaker at a multi-college conference on the role of youth in post-World War II planning in March of 1942. **Patricia Stetson** remembered her Girl Scout troop welcoming the First Lady.*

Eleanor Roosevelt came to Oberlin under the auspices of Oberlin College to speak at Finney Chapel. I had to get my first permanent because I was one of the seven Girl Scouts who were going to meet her. I went to Nellie Barber's beauty salon, which was above the Apollo Theater. Each soon-to-be curl was wrapped; and then a long wire was extended above my head and connected to a huge machine that was plugged into a socket. After sitting there for an hour, someone unwrapped the curls. I ended up with a Shirley Temple-ish hairdo.

I never will forget that all of this was because of Eleanor. We had to look our very best. We got our Girl Scout uniforms on, and our speeches prepared and we met her out in front of Finney Chapel. She had on black silk hose. Her skirt was very long—sort of mid-calf length. She was very stately and tall. Since we were part of the group who met her, we sat in the front row of Finney Chapel. I remember looking up at these beautiful black shoes



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt caused quite a stir when she spoke in Finney Chapel in 1942. Pat Stetson (right) and the fellow Girl Scouts shown here were among the seven greeters.

with huge silver buckles and pointed toes. I think I saw more of her shoes than I saw anything else.

It was a real thrill that Eleanor Roosevelt would come to little old Oberlin, Ohio. I was too young to know the politics behind it—whether a professor was instrumental in this, or whether she was trying to push some of her husband's views. I don't know because I have no idea what she had to say. I don't remember a single word. It really didn't matter, which is even worse. But it was exciting for Oberlin and for us.

*Although Oberlin College was a positive influence in the town, the relationship between the two entities was becoming less harmonious. **Harriet Reynolds** observed the beginning of a “town” versus “gown” mentality.*

Soon after we arrived in Oberlin in 1945 we discovered that the townspeople who were not connected with the college very often thought differently from the way college people did. There was a sort of tension between the two groups. The townspeople were inclined to be more conservative. They liked things the way they had been, whereas many of the college people were interested in having some things changed. Sometimes, if a group of college faculty would have an idea that they thought would really be a great betterment for the town, people who had other interests would just automatically get on the other side of the fence.

***Laurine Bongiorno** suggested a reason for this.*

When my family first came to Oberlin in 1918, unity between town and gown was closer than it became a little later. I was always close to the college community because I belonged to the gown end of it. I knew people who ran



*Laurine Bongiorno,
in 1925*

the stores, and they knew me as a high school girl. You never had to give your name at a store, but now I do, for no one knows anybody. I don't know them, and they don't know me. Also, when I came, the college was much smaller than it is now, and the faculty was much smaller too. As a high school girl, I knew every member of the faculty by sight. I don't know a quarter of them now by sight.



Laurine and Andrew Bongiorno on their wedding day, July 5, 1933.

Weathering Hard Times

*In spite of perceived differences in priorities and attitudes, the town and the college were interdependent. **Molly Ludwig** reported that the town's reliance on the college helped its economy weather the storm during the Great Depression.*

Oberlin was not too bad off during the Depression. The students that were coming then were from fairly wealthy families, and the college was the main source of income for the whole town. The one thing that did affect us was the bank closing. I think that was in 1933. Everybody was almost insane because bank accounts were frozen for a few days. Then they allowed you to take a certain amount of money out until they were opened again. Several banks, one in particular in Amherst, a city 8.5 miles north of Oberlin, never did open again, and people did lose most of their money. But that didn't happen in Oberlin.

According to **Dorothy Smith**, Oberlin College remained solvent by cutting salaries by 10 percent in 1931 and freezing them in subsequent years. Others survived the Depression by bartering for merchandise or services. In addition, older children sought jobs to contribute to the family's income. **Mildred Arthrell**, for example, worked in a grocery store.

My father was out of a job, but he found one at ten cents an hour cleaning chickens for a butcher. I remember going in after school one night to see him. There he stood in this cold, cold room in back of this butcher shop cleaning chickens. It really never was enough money to support the whole family, but we never went on relief. I don't know how we did it. We charged everything we could.

I got a job in the grocery store working Saturdays. We made two dollars for all of Saturday. In the summers I worked half days but all day Saturday, and I made six or seven dollars a week. With that, however, we could buy nearly enough groceries for a whole week. Everything was very, very cheap then. Bananas would be five cents a pound; potatoes might be ten pounds for nineteen cents; a loaf of bread a dime; and a pound of butter twenty-nine cents.

My mother often said that we really weren't that much worse off during the Depression because we had been so poor before. I think it hit people who were well off because some of them lost everything they owned.

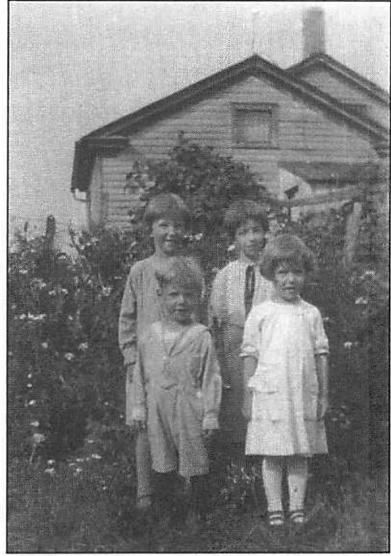
Adora Godette, a teenager during the Depression, earned income by cleaning houses and watching children.

In '33 we were still in a Depression. That's when my Daddy had a shoe-shine stand. A Royal-Feel shine cost ten cents. People would come from all over with shoes for Daddy to dye. You'd have a pair of brown shoes, and if you couldn't afford a pair of black ones and you needed black ones, he would dye them for you. We did housework and maid work. My brother was playing in a band, so he always had some work to do. I just did whatever I could and was quite

a good babysitter. It was kind of hard times, but we managed. I remember lots of times we would have bread and milk for supper.

*Although times were tough, **Mary Joy** acknowledged that one could always find someone better or worse off financially.*

Even during the Depression I was never deprived in any way. I could go to school and see that there were some children who had whole oranges in their lunch, and there were some children who came day after day with cold biscuits and fried potato sandwiches. I was very much in the middle. I had a good lunch, but it was not fancy, nor was it poor. I was perhaps young enough so that I wasn't self-conscious about my homemade clothes or my hand-me-down clothes. I've always been content with what I had. I could see that I was better off than so many other people.



Mary Hobbs Joy (right front) and her siblings, ca. 1928.

*Neighbor-owned businesses often extended credit to those without money for purchases. **Mildred Chapin** shared a conversation she overheard with her father, Bert Locke, owner of Locke's Grocery.*

People came to our home at suppertime, in the evenings especially, to see my father. Of course, we were never in the living room and never bothered listening, but we knew that they were coming to get credit so they could have food on their table. Only once did I overhear a statement that made me think for a long time. I heard my father say to a man, "I want to help you, and I will, but I wish my daughter could have as nice clothes as your daughter has." I don't

know who the daughter was. I wondered many times. But to this day, I don't know whether we were poor or not.

*As the Depression lingered on, some families relied on government assistance programs. **Margaret Smith's** family was one of them.*

I was born in 1930, so I was little, but I remember that my brother worked for the riding academy out on Lincoln Street [then named Follett Street]. Sometimes he used the horse, and he would ride me with him, and there was someplace downtown that we had to go to get food. Now, my mother worked, and my daddy eventually worked on the WPA [Work Projects Administration], which a lot of people were against, but that fed us. Because we had a family of six children, we could go down and get some food about once a month. I remember it bothered my brother.

*Even though money was tight, jobs were sometimes available on a day-by-day basis. **Pat Stetson** described how her father hired men for construction.*

The stone ledges on the side wall of the "Corner Drug Store," as it was known, on the southwest corner of College and Main Streets, were a local gathering place. Ohly's was one of a number of pharmacies in this location over the years. This photograph dates from 1941.

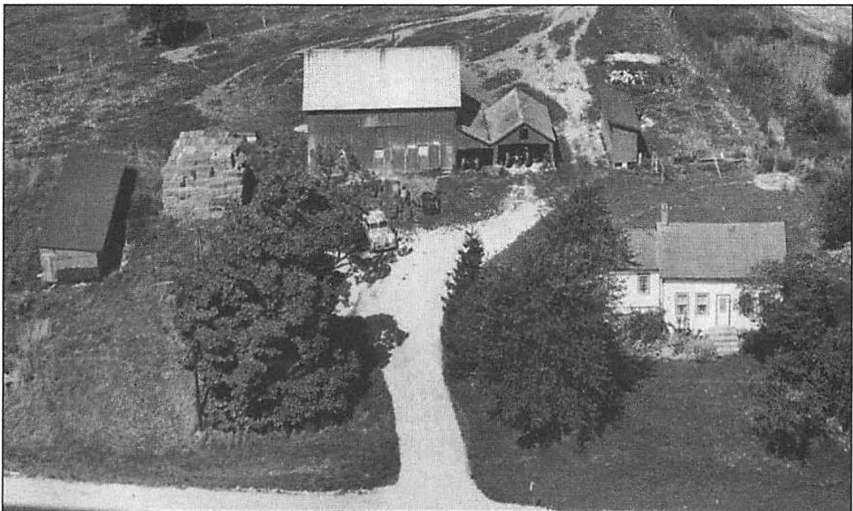


In 1932 we were building our home on the farm. If you wanted to hire someone, you just went to the corner of College and Main Streets by Ohly's Drug Store. Anyone who was unemployed that day would congregate there and maybe sit on the stone ledge.

You could go down to the corner and say, "I need two men to work for half a day. Is anyone interested?" I think maybe the general fee was a dollar a day, but the unions were coming into being—probably all for the good or maybe not. I don't know. Then a union inspector came and said, "These men are not unionized." My father said he had his friends working for him, and he was paying them the going wage. They were getting along very well, and would he, the union inspector, please vamoose!

*Similarly, some farmers hired short-term laborers, who often came by train through Oberlin. Even if work was not available, **Mary Joy's** mother never turned away anyone looking for a meal, according to Mary's nephew, Terry Hobbs. The family fed or gave them permission to hunt on their Russia Township property. In exchange, travelers were asked to donate their pocket change to Mary's Church Circle's Miles of Pennies drive. In this way, Mary recalled, the men felt they had paid their way.*

The Hobbs farm on Hallauer Road, southeast of Oberlin, date unknown.



I wasn't aware of the bread lines. I do know that there were a lot of single men traveling alone who came to our house for a few hours of work. Not necessarily even for that, but we fed them. We always had fried eggs or fried potatoes and milk and bread for them to eat. Occasionally they would stay a few days and give dad a hand with the chores. But mostly, they were traveling from one opportunity to the next.

4. WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Strong Women in Difficult Circumstances

*Married women could rely on their husbands' income, but single, divorced, or widowed women needed to earn their own livelihood. These women often found entry into employment through their homemaking skills. **Ruby May Hall** shared her family's story.*

My father died in 1918; I was thirteen years old. My mother did housework. The first two or three years, she did washing and ironing at home. We had two tubs: one for washing and one for rinsing. In the summertime, when it was good weather, we could do it on our back porch. There was no basement. After Gertrude and Dorothy were in school, she went out and did housework at people's houses. In a way, that was better because she was able to get away.

***Mildred Arthrell's** mother was a divorcée with big ambitions. Millie described her mother's path to becoming a businesswoman with the help of her reluctant daughter.*

After my mother divorced my father, she found a house at 284 West Lorain Street that was for rent. I think it was thirty-five dollars a month. My mother had this idea of how she could make some money. She went to a store downtown, bought sheets, curtains, bedspreads, and towels, charged them all to me—and never told me. I had worked at the Business College as a teacher for three years, so I was making some money. I was really supporting the family.

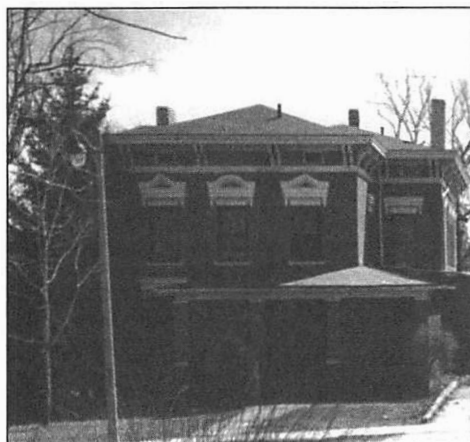
When I got the bill, I was so angry. I said, "What do you mean? I haven't bought one thing in that store." She said, "I have to have these things. I'm going to try and

start a business.” Not long after this, she hung a sign out saying “Tourists” and promptly began to get tourists because that route going by on West Lorain Street was used a great deal. It was like a little hotel. She loved it, and she would have the same people stop over and over.

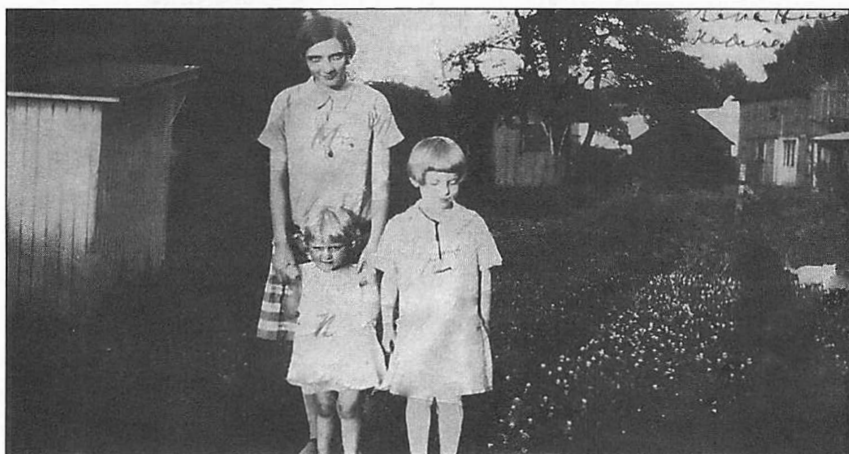
Mother began to get connections in Oberlin. She began to know this professor and that professor and this businessperson and that businessperson. They would send her customers. Then, the use of that route changed. The next thing I knew, she had a couple of elderly people staying

with her. I just hated to have them in the house. That was a terrible way to feel, but they were so feeble and such miserable kinds of people.

Gradually she took in more elderly people. Finally she said, “I found a house where I can really open up a nursing home.” It was a beautiful brick house on the corner of South Pleasant and East



Haulk's Nursing Home, 63 East College Street, ca. 1948.



Mildred Haulk Arthrell, age thirteen, and her younger sisters in 1926.

College Streets. By the time she got it all fixed up, she had a gorgeous home. She had beautiful blue carpeting in the living room. The fireplace was just a gorgeous cherry wood. The place looked so elegant. Well, she kept filling up the rooms. She had several college professors' mothers living with her. She had all these connections. One of the town doctors said that she was making a mistake by not filling the whole house up, so pretty soon, the beautiful living room was gone, and there were six beds in there.

She was extremely successful and ended up living like a queen, having anything and everything she ever wanted. It was amazing that somebody with nothing got to have all that she wanted by her own gumption. She was someone to be really proud of. She had no training besides housework and cooking, yet she was one of the first to open a nursing home in Oberlin.

*Housekeeping jobs afforded **Marie Lehti** the opportunity to attend Oberlin College, where she studied to become a teacher. It did not take long for neighbors to learn about Marie, and soon she was not only cleaning houses but also acting as a health aide, companion, waitress, and even dairy farmer.*

It was rugged because my parents didn't have any money to pay my tuition, and I had to earn it all. And so, I was busy all the time. I didn't have time to do anything else besides study and work. All during the vacation periods, including the summer vacation, I worked, helping the professors' wives clean their houses. I was paid thirty-five cents an hour. I suppose there were typists who earned more than that, or tutors, but that was the only thing I knew how to do. So I did it.

The first one I worked for was Mrs. [Dora] Monroe. She was bothered with arthritis very badly, so I had to



Marie Lehti, in 1929.

do a good many things for her to make her comfortable. And, of course, I kept her apartment going. But in the meantime [Mrs. Anne M. Howard], the lady across the alley from where we were living, asked if I could come over and get her out of bed in the morning, wash her, and put her in a wheelchair because she had severe arthritis. And then her Aunt Tilly, who was eighty-two years old, gave her food, prepared it, and so on. But Aunt Tilly couldn't do the personal care for Mrs. Howard that I was able to do. Mrs. Howard loved to entertain with dinner parties. She had been a high school teacher in Oberlin and knew a lot of people. So, whenever she entertained, I waited on table and did the dishes afterward.

After the death of Mrs. Monroe, another neighbor, across the road this time, came to me and said she wanted me to come and help her with her sister [Mrs. William G. Caskey], who was very frail and quite elderly. I was supposed to be a companion for her. Well, she was a very independent lady even though she was very frail. She'd have no part of this business of having a companion. She didn't need one. After we shuffled her pillow and moved things around, I went down to the barn to help Mr. Caskey. He had been a professor at Oberlin but decided he wanted to farm again. He'd been born and reared on a farm, so he milked cows. I helped him



Caskey House, 460 East College Street, ca. 1990.

in the barn with the milking—the cows were milked by machine. Of course, we had to wash the machine and all the utensils that went with the milk, and then cool the milk to get it ready to go to the pasteurizing place.

Two monuments in front of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, at 87 North Main Street, salute women.

The fountain is a replica of one in Florence, Italy, that symbolizes love and wisdom. Henry J. Haskell (OC 1896) had it created to honor his late wife Katharine Wright (OC 1898), sister and partner of aviators Wilbur and Orville Wright.

On the right is a tribute to Oberlin College's decision to allow women in its Bachelor of Arts program. Its inscription reads: "THIS GATEWAY COMMEMORATES THE ENTRANCE OF WOMEN INTO COLLEGE EDUCATION."



Climbing the Career Ladder

A few women ventured out of Oberlin to work in the corporate world. One was **Helen Johnson**.

When I was through with courses at the Oberlin Business College, I went with three or four students to Akron to interview at Firestone. Well, I already had a choice of two jobs, one in Elyria and one in Lorain, but I went along for the ride. When we got to Firestone, the lady there who did the personnel hiring just assumed that I was there with the others for an interview. So she interviewed me, and I was the only one of the four of us who was offered a job. This was my first experience with a corporation. I didn't know that there were offices, you know. And I was just thrilled with it, so I just said, "When do I start?"



Members of the Beta Gamma Sigma Sorority of the Oberlin School of Commerce, 1932-1933.

Another was **Jennie Tucker**, who found employment at Burrows Book Store in Cleveland.

I'll tell you how I got the job. My father was doing some work for Mrs. Jackson, who was a friend of ours. He went over one day, and she showed him a magazine ad. I had an offer and forty dollars that my aunt had sent me to visit her up in Minneapolis with the idea that maybe I'd get a job up there. So, I didn't really care if I got a job, but Mrs. Jackson had been so kind to think of me that I thought the least I could do would be to write to this woman in the ad. I told her that I'd like to work in a bookstore. I got this form letter back saying that there was no such job available. After about a week, I got a letter telling me to go back again. I went back and did get a job. A year and a half later Mr. Dredge, who was my boss and a

1916 Oberlin College graduate, was made the head of the largest branch, and they made me advertising manager. He asked me, "How would you like a new boss?" I said that I would like to be my own boss. He said, "Well, you are going to be!"

*As women found higher-level positions, their earnings often failed to compensate fairly for their increased job responsibilities or qualifications. This was the case with **Hope Hibbard**, who accepted a faculty position at Oberlin College in 1928 after earning two doctorates, one at Bryn Mawr College and one at the Sorbonne.*

I had just finished three years of living in Paris. I was working in the Sorbonne and also in the marine laboratory on the coast near Brest. While I was there, I began looking around for a place to live in the States. I applied to all of the colleges and universities that I could think of. Finally, I got a very nice invitation to come to Oberlin by Mr. [Robert Allyn] Budington, who was the chairman of the Zoology Department. When he offered me the job I said, "Well, this is fine. I just wondered if I couldn't get a little more salary than [\$4,000/year] in view of all the training of one kind or another that I'd had." Whereupon he suggested that it would make it very difficult in the department if he changed the offer. In later years, I think I was very brash even to suggest a change.



*Hope Hibbard, in
1928*

*Pursuing male-dominated occupations was difficult, but **Marion Kelly** was successful at breaking into the newspaper business in the 1940s. However, she was assigned to write for the women's and society pages and dressed according to stereotype.*

I fell into my newspaper job only because I fell into the Society Department. In those days, that's where a young woman out of college fit. I did apply for a job at the *Cleveland Press*, and a man told me to go out and get my own story. I thought, "Oh, my Heavens, I just can't go out and



Marion Kelly, ca.
1960

walk into, for instance, the Mounds Club, a gambling joint in Cleveland." So I fell into a job at the *Plain Dealer* on the Woman's Page, and that's how all that began.

We wore hats to the office, and I always had to have white gloves. In the newspaper business, you really wore your hat to work. I never saw any other business where women had their hats on, but we did. I don't know who we thought we were. But I looked very well in hats, and so I didn't

mind. They were the big, marvelous pull-downs like a Fedora. I had a black velvet sort of cloche hat with white bunny fur right in one ear, and it was . . . oh, it was gorgeous!

Changing Economic Conditions

*The Depression signaled changes in employment. Schools were graduating more students than could find jobs. Women who did find positions were forced to accept jobs at reduced wages—or even without any salary at all, as **Florene Worcester** had.*

In 1933 about seventy-five of us students graduated from the Oberlin Kindergarten-Primary Training School. Only five or six were able to get jobs. Rather than not do anything related to teaching, Marguerite Lyman and I offered to teach the kindergarten down at the Centennial School, which was to



Florene Worcester,
in 1933



The Oberlin Kindergarten Training School, bef. 1927.

be closed due to lack of funds. We did do this, and thus got a year's experience but no salary.

Millie Arthrell *was a secretary at the Oberlin School of Commerce before assuming more responsibility for teaching without a concomitant raise in salary.*

Mr. Henderson, president of the Business College, came to the door and said, "Would you come in here a minute?" I thought, "He's going to fire me." Instead, he said, "How would you like to teach? Miss Burns is not coming back because we cannot pay her salary. We thought maybe you could start out with the typing students, and we'll see how that goes. Would you want to try that at your same salary of ten dollars per week?" I think there has never been anything in my life that made me feel better than that. I felt as if I was riding on a cloud.

*Oberlin College had a history of hiring both husband and wife into faculty positions. In fact, both of **Ellen Adams's***

parents were professors of voice in the Conservatory of Music.

Dorothy Smith, however, noted a change in this policy during the Depression:

Back in the thirties they put a rule into effect that faculty wives could not be employed by the college. Before that, there had been a number of couples both working for the college. I don't know whether it was an official rule or just happened that the older couples were retiring, and when they rehired, they only rehired one person.



Oberlin Conservatory voice professors Charles and Margaret Adams, parents of Ellen Adams, in 1945.

Although the reason for this policy may have been economic, **Millie Arthrell's** remarks implied a lingering prejudice against employment of married women.

It was rare that there was a married teacher. In fact, this was considered quite terrible if a married woman would take a job away from a single woman. That was the general feeling. People would say, "Her husband is working, and that is not right."

During the Depression, teaching credentials no longer assured employment for women regardless of marital status. **Jennie Tucker**, a single woman, had both a college degree and teaching certificate, but she enrolled in business college in order to be more employable.

I went to business college. I had a perfectly good, unused four-year provisional teaching certificate from the state of

Ohio. It was this kind of a year as far as teaching positions go. Only about two in my field opened up around here. My field was English lit. I had twenty hours of French, but in those days, you didn't learn a language well because you had no way of practicing the pronunciation and finding out if you were anywhere near what it should be.

*When necessary, wives of Oberlin business owners found work in their family's stores. However, prevailing attitudes undermined support for women with children. **Dorothy Boyers** shared her opinion.*

My friends in town were affected because the wives took positions in their husbands' stores. Mrs. Ohly ended up clerking in Ohly's Drug Store so that the income would be

Always the Best in Drugs



**FILLING PRESCRIPTIONS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART
OF OUR BUSINESS**

Whitman's Candies . . . Sheaffer and Parker Pens

Royal and Corona Portable Typewriters

Expert Kodak Finishing

OHLY'S CORNER DRUG STORE

"On the corner over 30 years" — Walgreen Agency

A drugstore occupied the southwest corner of Main and College Streets for almost a century—from 1900 until 1994. Since the mid-1990s it has housed a series of restaurants. This advertisement dates from 1942.

increased. Ran Haylor owned and ran the bookstore. His wife, Margaret, a good friend of mine, also became a clerk in Haylor's Bookstore. I think this was in direct relationship to the Depression.

But those two women had families that were old enough so that it wasn't such a problem as it is with modern women today. In those days, there was no sense of needing that sort of thing for one's personal image to feel liberated. Thank goodness!

*World War II brought the country out of the Depression and marked a shift in women's attitudes and roles. The transformation occurred almost overnight, as witnessed by **Millie Arthrell**.*

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, we had gone with friends to see Greta Garbo's last movie, *Ninotchka*, in Cleveland. We were having dinner when the radios blared that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. It was just the most shocking feeling and didn't seem real. We had just seen an enjoyable movie, had enjoyed a wonderful dinner, and here, all these people had been attacked with no warning whatsoever. It was just a very frightening feeling. It also made for a great surge of patriotism that hadn't existed before. Immediately, there were all kinds of young men signing up. The whole country was up in arms—figuratively, at least. My husband decided it was time to get into the war effort himself, so he signed up for the Merchant Marines. I was sort of left high and dry in our nice little home.



Millie and George Arthrell in New York City, 1944. George is wearing his Merchant Marine uniform.

THE TRIBUNE FOUNDED 189

Published Every Monday and Thursday

1917 AND 1941

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The above composite picture shows an Oberlin soldier in the first photograph as he appeared in 1917, and his son, a United States Marine, in the second. It graphically illustrates a father-son relationship throughout the nation, as the United States men formerly entered against World War.

At the left is F. H. Harley, as he appeared when a member of the Engineers Company, 328th Infantry, 84th Division, U. S. Army. He and now sports in France.

The mother of the boy, at the right, was taken 25 years (1912) when he was 4 years old. His father, Dan H. Harley, 12th Cavalry, 19th Division, at Camp Meade, was 21. His father was when his picture was taken.

The composite print was prepared by F. H. Harley, whose hobby

William Chly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Chly, is believed to be on duty on a Navy tanker in Pu-

Mr. Warren Shafter reported that she talked last night by telephone with her son Richard, an ensign in the U. S. Navy, and that he is now on Acadia duty, having been transferred some time ago from the Pacific squadron.

Second Lieutenant Wilbert Shafter is now with the battleship at Parris Island, South Carolina.

Major William Fisher, of Chicago, a nephew of Mrs. J. V. Hill, was last reported as duty "somewhere in the Pacific."

14 from Here Pass Army Physical Exam

36 of 53 From District
Examined Will Be

Listed "I-A"
Of the 25 men from the Oberlin Draft District sent to the Cleveland army for army physical examinations last week, 26 have been accepted and decisions will be classified at the board's meeting as "I-A," ready for immediate military service. Frumkin and

(EDITORIAL)

If the opinion of American military experts is correct, the sudden attack yesterday upon the United States and British bases in the Pacific is, in effect, the first deep thrust in Japan's art of national kamikaze. Experts often are mistaken, but we are confident that this time events will prove them correct. How is it possible, unless they have unbelievable confidence in Hitler's sight, that the Japanese themselves can in any great numbers believe their mad ambitions will prevail against the overwhelming re-

They will not be easily beaten, of course. The very nature of this attack, the very manner in which it is planned, the determined and suicidal manner in which it was carried out, is proof of the ferocity which will be characteristic of the war in which we now are completely engaged. We will win only after fearful sacrifices—but who can doubt we will win? Nothing could be better calculated than was Japan's attack, to weld a complete national unity here. Our morale is high today. We are completely determined to win. We are completely conscious of what is at stake. Only the war which is being waged at this time, under such circumstances, can show how any doubts concerning our moral right to win force to the utmost to drive Japan back and crush out its power at the source!

When two young boys told us of the first radio reports of the attack yesterday, we refused to believe them. Despite the tenseness of mounting tension, despite the feeling of crisis in the air, how could any of us at first comprehend the stark reality of an act which seemed so fantastic? Second thought shows it to be entirely in the pattern well established by the Nazis as they have struck down one victim after another in Europe, but at first we refused to believe, and having "slipped in" our occidental mind still cannot comprehend this supreme example of the wrath of the Oriental. To us this boy is the little son of the surely nothing and appears to us rather innately.

But now that the first surprise is over, and before we all become completely ripe is the war's execution, at least two thoughts occur to us which we suggest Americans must be determined not

All of Oberlin Hears Radio Broadcast President's War Address

Most Chevrolet's 4,500 residents, and the college's 3,800 students, were beside their radios at 12:29 today when President Franklin D. Roosevelt's address before the U. S. Congress in special joint session, was broadcast in the nation.

The President asked Congress to pass a resolution declaring that since Japan's unprovoked attack of yesterday "a state of war has existed" between the United States and Japan.

Shortly thereafter Congress passed the proposed resolution.

Senate Approves \$200 C
The vote in the Senate was 12 to 4. The vote in the House was 218-4.

The President declared that per-
sonally, December 7, 1941, is "a
date which will live in infamy."
The Japanese attack abruptly, he
said, was deliberately planned
many days, many weeks ago. He
called it premeditated invasion
and deliberate treachery.

Other excerpts from his address
as it was heard here over the
radio, follow:

"Last night Japanese forces

67

IGNORE

THE MANPOWER SHORTAGE

"WOMANPOWER" is taking over! With the easily-applied paints and ready-pasted wallpapers here at OBERLIN HARDWARE, it's just a snap to do a tidy, little decorating job. No fuss—no bother—just come here for all the supplies and directions you need. We're always ready with a fine supply of both!



ALWAYS L-O-N-G ON VALUES



DEAN & BARRY

HOUSE PAINT

\$3.25

GAL.



Floor Paint

Quart

\$1.10



BRUSHES



25c

TO \$5.00

Muraltone

JUST MIX
WITH
WATER

One Coat
Covers
Everything!

SAVE!

\$2.25

GALLON

Oberlin Hardware Co.

Phone 205

13 South Main Street

This 1942 advertisement in the Oberlin News-Tribune seems to have been designed to appeal to women on the home front.

I was one of those women for whom it was an advantage for everybody to go off and be foreign correspondents and go off to war. I was the woman left at home, who all of a sudden was covering City Desk assignments. Before this, I would never have had the opportunity. During the war, my newspaper career thrived. I ended up making about eighty dollars a week, when eighty dollars a week was really a fantastic salary. Also, I loved the job.

*African Americans, including **Margaret Smith**, also experienced increased employment opportunities.*

During the war, my sister got hired at General Electric where they hadn't hired blacks or women, and we began to live better. I look on war as terrible and how it kills people, but what it did in my life was to change it to the point where I could go to college.

Opportunities amid Limited Options

*After the war, spouses of returning servicemen formed one of the largest pools of potential employees in Oberlin. However, gains in employment at Oberlin College, the largest employer in the city, often were limited to secretarial positions, according to **Dorothy Smith**.*

As the war ended, the college got an influx of young men. That meant that many of them brought wives back to campus with them. Wives needed jobs, and the secretary's office for many years had been the place where you applied if you wanted an office job in the college.

*The end of World War II also signaled a baby boom, requiring more public schools and teachers. **Jeanne Bay** and **Fran Baumann** selected careers in teaching, believing that they had few other options.*

My reasons for becoming a teacher are not very noble. My mother was a teacher, and that might have had some in-

fluence on me, but really, in 1950 I think there weren't that many things that were open to women to do. Teaching was certainly one of them. I loved English and literature, and so I just kind of went into teaching, as a lot of people did at the time. I think that I grew into it. I came to love teaching through the years, but it wasn't something that I was inspired to do at the time.—*Jeanne Bay*



Jeanne Bay, in 1974

I really wanted to go to college. No one in my family had been to college before, so I was the first person in my family to go to college. I didn't want to be a nurse; I didn't want to go to secretarial school. The choices were limited, so I became a teacher, and I don't think I ever regretted it.—*Fran Baumann*

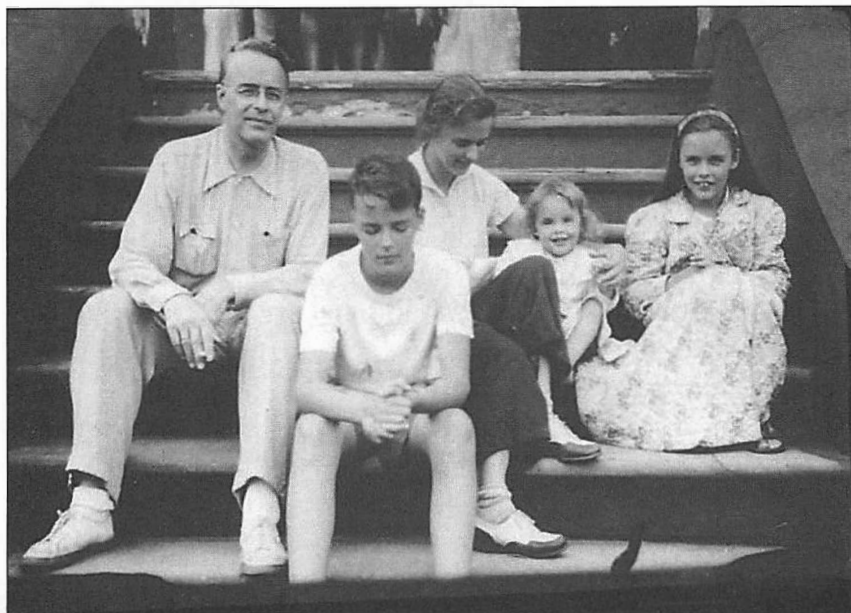
*Teaching in the public schools now required an undergraduate degree as well as a teaching certificate. Oberlin College was the most obvious choice for women who wished to pursue higher education. Incentives, such as tuition remission for faculty spouses, encouraged **Ursula Stechow** to attend the college in the 1960s to prepare for a teaching career in languages.*

Our first night in our new home on West College Street, I went to bed and found one small book in the shelf above my head. I grabbed it and found a French New Testament. I began to read it. "That beautiful language," I thought. "That used to be my life! Why on earth did I let go of it all these many years?"

It was the beginning of the school year, so I asked our good friend, Jack Kneller, whether I might audit his *Madame Bovary* literature class, where I knew not one word of English would be spoken. I myself had not spoken French in close to thirty years, and I had no idea how it

would be for me. But it's like bicycling or swimming. One does not unlearn that sort of thing. Next thing I heard was that the public schools all over the country were looking for foreign language teachers. When I asked Jack about that, he said that the department would welcome me full force and did I know that the Oberlin trustees had just voted tuition remission to any faculty wife planning to prepare herself for teaching in whatever subject.

When the best teacher in my whole life, Simon Bartell, greeted my enrollment slip with, "You have courage, Madam," I did not yet know what I was getting into, but it was too late to withdraw. I was enrolled and gave to it the very best I could. It was a fabulous year. What with practice teaching and all the glimpses ahead, I could be pretty sure of a job thereafter in Oberlin. I did not know this would lead to unforgettable years of exciting joys in teaching and in contacts with vastly receptive kids, and another set of close Oberlin friends to share all this in a very new and wonderful way.



Ursula and Wolfgang Stechow and their children, ca. 1958.

*Oberlin College was convenient for those living in the town, but its high tuition discouraged local enrollment. Government programs in the 1960s and 1970s helped increase access to higher education. In the 1980s and 1990s increasing opportunities and lower-cost alternatives at community colleges and branch campuses of state universities provided more flexible scheduling for working women and those with children. Those with career aspirations, such as **Elizabeth Spurlock**, now could pursue their dreams.*



*Elizabeth Spurlock,
date unknown*

I have a neighbor, Mrs. Scott. She lived next door, and we would often talk over the back fence. She said, "You know, I promised my mother that I would go back to school. She was very disappointed when I married, and I promised her that, if I ever got a chance, I'd go back and finish school." So I said, "You know, I've had a year of college, and I can't get a decent job. I really can't." One year of college didn't do anything for you in those days. I couldn't even get a job with the telephone company. At that time, if I had had my degree, I could teach. Anyway, that is how I came to go back to school: talking with Mrs. Scott over the fence.

A Kent State University branch being in Elyria made it possible. So, I worked at the [Oberlin] Co-op Bookstore in the daytime, and two nights a week I would go over to Elyria to Kent. I did that for about six years, and I finished by just going two nights a week. Then, I went down to the main campus for two summers.

Del Jr., my son, was here in Oberlin College when I started going to school. I remember his saying to me, "Mother, you spend more time on two courses than I spend on all of my courses put together." I told him that I was older and that I had to outline everything to really be sure it was going into my head. It was hard, really hard because I never quit working either, and I had all

that washing and ironing and cooking and cleaning to do. It really was difficult, but I was determined to do it. I really loved going to school. I loved all my courses. I guess I had a lot of energy, too. I felt that if I went ahead and did this, I'd have more money. And I'd have something—a career of my own.

Entrepreneurship

*Through ownership of retail businesses, women played an increasing role in Oberlin's economic development. **Marvyl Fields** described two stores owned and operated by women in the first half of the century.*

Mrs. [Lillian Wilson] Mitchell's store on North Main had little knick-knacks and penny things. She was a widow or divorcée, I guess, because I never heard of her husband being around. Kids all went to her store to get penny candy. If you wanted a pencil it was a penny, and five cents for a tablet, and five cents for a composition book. Then, she started selling secondhand schoolbooks. People with large families could sometimes get books cheaper there.

There were a couple of hat stores, and one very famous store owned by Marie DeFrance [at 24 South Main Street]. She was colored but she went for French. She made beautiful hats. If she were here now, she would wonder why we don't wear hats! Maybe if she were here to make them, we would wear more. But they were so high. I remember one year she had one that was a sailor hat and made of soft straw. It was a manila color and had a brown ribbon around it. Oh, I wanted that so bad. I just had to have it! I remember it was ten dollars. I just knew I wasn't going to get it. But I did. I think my mother traded off with her and probably made her a dress, so I got that hat for Easter.

Grace Harlow's entry into a business partnership with her sister, Betty Martin, was unplanned.

In 1962 I decided I'd better come back to Oberlin because mother was getting up pretty well in years. I felt that Betty had the entire responsibility for her, and I didn't think that was fair when I really was footloose and fancy-free. I felt



The Martin Inn, shown here in 1955, offered food and lodging in an old house that was sandwiched between brick commercial buildings on the south side of East College Street, just east of Main Street. Today a parking lot occupies the site.

that it was partly my duty to come back to Oberlin and help Betty take care of her.

After I had been here for a while I got itchy and thought, "Oh, I've got to do something." So I started working for Mrs. Habecker at her gift shop there in the theater building [at 21 East College Street]. She just sort of gave me all the responsibility, and I figured, if I had all the responsibility, I might as well own the place. So, I bought it. We moved from there into the Martin Inn [at 31 East College Street].

Next I moved down to where the *Oberlin News-Tribune* is [at 42 South Main Street] and made the store purely gifts. Then Betty sort of got a little interested and thought, "You know, we ought to expand a little." She was very ambitious and a pretty good businesswoman and wanted to do big things. I was a little timid and didn't know much about it. But I thought, "Oh well, if she wants to shoulder some of the responsibility, I'll do it." So, we decided to buy the building where I am now [at 27 West College]. Well, to get back to my deciding to move there, I thought, "Well it's very silly for me not to take advantage of all of the knowledge I had in the flower business." So, with the cooler already built there [from past grocery store occupants], we decided just to go into flowers. I was just going to have a

The first home of the long-lived Carlyle Shop was in the Oberlin Inn. In about 1935 a camera caught co-owner Peggy Glass proudly displaying the shop's offerings.



few flowers for the students to buy, and that was going to be it. But now, that's almost bigger than my gift business.

Grace and Betty's gift shop, the Carlyle Shop, had a history of female ownership since its establishment in the Oberlin Inn in 1935. Rachel Rawdon, wife of Oberlin School Superintendent Howard L. Rawdon, managed both the Carlyle Shop and the Hi-O-Hi Tea Room at 39 College Place. Two other women, Peggy Glass and Pauline Habecker, owned it in the 1950s and 1960s. Two other sisters, Francine Toss and Lorraine Morrison, purchased the Carlyle Shop in 1986 and moved it to its present location, 17 West College Street, a few years later.

Marianne Cochrane grew up in her father's retail business, which included several downtown stores, among them Ben Franklin, located at 13 West College. She started doing odd jobs as a child and became manager of the store in 1961, when she was only twenty-three years old.

Jack, my brother, and I had a lot of work experience downtown from probably the time we were about nine years old. We did a lot of sweeping; we did a lot of dusting, did a lot of marking and counting merchandise. If there was not a real job left, you could always count paper plates. As I say, we were raised in the business, which I think a lot of children of businesspeople downtown were. I think we were kind of proud of the fact. If we were just going



The New

BEN FRANKLIN STORE

Quality Service

These vintage advertisements from Oberlin College's yearbook, the Hi-O-Hi, show (above) the interior of the Ben Franklin Store at 13 West College Street as it looked in 1941 and (below) the store's exterior as it appeared in 1956.



to hang out, we would say, “We can’t hang around because we have to go work.” When you’re nine years old to when you’re fourteen years old and they think that you’re working, this was a pretty nice thing to say to your peer group.

By the middle of the twentieth century, malls began to draw people away from local shops. Stores in Oberlin faced increasing competition from Elyria’s Midway Mall, which opened in 1965. Marianne went on to explain the effect on retailers, who needed to be more sensitive to a changing clientele in order to survive.

As the malls and big-box stores came up, I think that the college student purchases became more important, at least to us at Ben’s. Consequently, we changed our merchandise mix. We really did cater to the needs of the college students. Interestingly enough, Halloween is huge with college students. They have their big costume parties. We used to look very carefully and make sure that the students were going to be here and not on fall break. We would try and find this out a year ahead because it affected our Halloween purchases. It also affected our Easter purchases because many times they would be gone for Easter. You change your mixes to fit your situation. In this day and age, I think Oberlin as a business district is geared to students’ needs.

It used to be we were the primary shopping destination. We have to realize now that we are not. We’re more there if you need something quick and you don’t have time to go to a large mall or something like that.

The stores that have survived up to now, the stores that have been in town for a number of years, have carved out a niche. It isn’t going to be easy to survive no matter what happens, but I think that slowly we’re realizing that we are a quaint little downtown. I noticed this before I left the Ben Franklin store [now owned by Krista Long]. We were starting to become, maybe not a tourist destina-

tion in the sense that somebody would come for a couple of days, but we were finding that we were having mainly groups of ladies that were coming out from the east side of Cleveland. At Ben's, we would hear comments, "Oh my goodness, I haven't seen a Ben Franklin store since I was a kid."

5. THE COLOR OF EQUALITY

Racial Bias: Reputation versus Reality

*A racially diverse town, Oberlin has always been vocal in its support of African Americans. In fact, historian Nat Brandt titled his book about Oberlin The Town that Started the Civil War, because of its abolitionist history and defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act. **Elizabeth Spurlock** remarked:*

Historically, there were more blacks here than in any small community around. It's because of the sentiments of the College and goes way back to the 1800s. Even in those days, about a third of the people in Oberlin were black. So, you feel that you can go anywhere and do anything—and you do.

At the turn of the century, families of different races lived among each other and sometimes worshipped together.



The First Church in Oberlin, as it looked between 1908 and 1920.

Marvyl Fields, an African American woman born in 1895, attended the first house of worship constructed in Oberlin: the First Church in Oberlin (originally Congregational, now United Church of Christ).

When I look back, there didn't seem to be any really racial atmosphere because people were just immediately accepted for what they were. They all belonged to one church in the beginning. My mother belonged there and her parents before. That was the church of Oberlin.



Mabel Brown, in
1939

Mabel Brown agreed with the sentiment that an individual should not be defined by skin color.

You can't look down on a person because of the color of their skin. I think blacks weren't looked down on either because we grew up with them. We didn't think anything about their skin being different than ours. We went to school with them. We just accepted them. So, when I came to high school here, I didn't think about all these colored kids who were in my class. Their skin color didn't mean anything to me.

Comments by **Bernice Grant**, however, suggested that a sense of toleration of African Americans replaced the movement to champion their rights.

Oberlin is different. You have a mixture of the educated, the uneducated, different races, different nationalities. I don't know if they really all do come together, but I think they tolerate each other—more so than they may in some other places. You know: You go your way and I'll go mine. He can do what he wants to do, and I'll do what I want to. I'm not going to bother him, and he's not going to bother me.

Although **Elizabeth Thomas** shrugged off racial differences, her dark complexion was not ignored by her childhood playmates.

Race wasn't that important because there were all kinds of people coming into our home [on North Professor Street] or out of it so much of the time. Our family was the only black family in the neighborhood, and everybody went back and forth. I guess because two of my grandparents were white, our family was sort of mixed up anyway. I have a lot of friends in Oberlin, and I never think of what color they are.



*Elizabeth Thomas,
in 1931*

I think that I was in the fourth or fifth grade before I even realized I was black. I had a friend who came to see me. I was taking a bath and she came into the bathroom. She was white, and she asked me if I was colored. I hadn't even thought of it before, and I had to stop and think. Because my mother was light and my father was brown skinned, I said, "Well, I guess I am half and half." And she said, "I thought one side of your body looked a little darker." From then on, I kept looking to see which side I thought was darker. That was the first time I became aware of being different from anybody else.

*As more African Americans moved into Oberlin, they settled in neighborhoods in one section of town. **Marvyl Fields** explained:*

As blacks came into Oberlin, they didn't have much money, and they would buy where land was cheaper. So, there weren't many of them that lived up in the town. They settled mostly in this southeast section and some on Lincoln Street.

*Soon neighborhoods were segregated, leading to fewer opportunities for children of various races to play together and develop friendships outside the classroom. **Mary Joy** witnessed this lack of social interaction.*

When I came into town to go to school in the seventh grade, we were friends without any racial differences as



In 1965 Janie Scott (front row, center) and her family sat for this formal photograph.

far as I was aware of. But this friendly relationship in the schoolroom and in the sports didn't go beyond the school. On the right side of my locker all through school was my very good friend Gertrude Hoffman, who was black. We shared lots of secrets and lots of confidences with each other. But I never was in her home, and she never was in mine. Apparently, during that time, people were working together and learning together, but their social life was not intermingled.

*By the 1930s **Janie Scott** had perceived that Oberlin was becoming a racially divided community despite its history of racial equality.*

My view of it is that Oberlin had been a very liberal community further back. More so, it seems, than when I first came in 1929. It seems to me that the change has come with numbers. I mean, with more blacks moving here from elsewhere, changes are a little bit more noticeable. I don't know that it's anybody's fault, but it just seems that

since more and more blacks have come to Oberlin, there's just a little bit more polarization.

*While some denied the existence of segregation in Oberlin, **Margaret Maruschak** witnessed it within the Oberlin public schools during the 1930s.*

Back in those days the color line was very strong. The Fine Arts Club would go out to Vermilion on the Lake and rent a cottage there for a weekend—a long weekend, like Memorial Day weekend or something like that. I remember that blacks weren't welcome to go. I can't think of any blacks except the two Young sisters, Bernice Young and her older sister. Bernice always would just say, "Oh, that's all right."



Margaret Maruschak, in 1935

They, of course, were not welcome at anything like the proms up at the inn or at our other hangouts like the Campus or Gibson's restaurants. Blacks understood. They knew that if they went to any of those places, they'd be thrown out. Years after that, when I was confronted with this fact, I said, "Oh no." Then, as I'd think about it, I'd realize, "No, I hadn't seen any blacks in any of those places."

*It is unclear whether extracurricular activities were off limits because of formal or informal school policies. African Americans such as **Adora Godette** were becoming more sensitive to prejudicial treatment but were hesitant to confront the status quo.*



Adora Godette, in 1933

I played basketball and soccer in school. Regretfully, I was only the second or maybe the third black girl to get a special letter for scholarship, leadership, and athletic ability. Up until then, they were not giving them to black students.

We were all kids together—all of us. I mean, to us there was no difference. It was mostly the administration that really created the problems. We had a black boy who was elected president of our senior class, but they wouldn't let him have it. They called for another vote.

My mother always said that there wasn't any prejudice in Oberlin, but she knew that there was some. You learn to live with it and you learn to overcome it.

*Oberlin College was not immune to incidents of racial prejudice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, one-third of all African American graduates from traditionally white institutions of higher learning were from Oberlin College. Shortly thereafter, fewer students of color enrolled, according to former college archivist William Bigglestone. It is unclear whether African Americans may have had more options for education then or the college failed to encourage their recruitment. Nevertheless, the college's reputation enticed African American student **Marjorie Johnson**. She grew up on the prairies of Wyoming and looked forward to coming east to college.*

I finally got enough money, with the scholarships that I had and what came from Oberlin, to begin to make my



In 1931 Marjorie Johnson (front right) posed with her Oberlin College dorm mates.

plans. I had been accepted and was getting all kinds of literature from Oberlin in preparation. I just couldn't believe this was happening to me. I was told which dormitory I was going to be in, and I was looking forward to coming with high hopes. Mr. Hubbard, my history teacher, kept telling me, "This is going to be an experience you shall never forget. Remember, Oberlin was first for women and it was first to open its doors to blacks."

Before long Marjorie's excitement waned, however.

I think that it was during the second week of classes that I had gone into the dining room. I was sitting there eating my breakfast. A little girl came in and sat at my table. She was from Florida. She had to sit there because that was the way seating was chosen. Every week we changed tables. Nobody stayed at one table long. This was a morning that six of us were at the table. I had already experienced a kind of being frozen out at the dining room table, but this morning we sat talking. The other people were laughing, but this girl sat there. She had brown hair, blue eyes, and I remember her as kind of chubby. I can see her now like yesterday. While we were eating, she suddenly screamed, "God, I'm eating with a nigger!" And she threw up everything; everything came out on the table.

The other kids sitting at the table were wide-eyed, wondering what had happened. It created such confusion in the dining room that I ran out into the living room and sat down. I just was weak in my knees. I remember Miss Pelton, our housemother, coming to me. I said, "What did I do? What did I do?" She said, "It wasn't what you did. She's just from the South, that's all."

She never sat at a table with me after that. I was conscious of her, and she seemed to be conscious of me. But more than that, every time I sat at the table I always saw my black hand on the white tablecloth. I said, "That is what's wrong. I am black. They feel it here. There must be something really wrong about being dark." I didn't say black, I just said "being dark."

*By the 1940s African Americans were becoming increasingly sensitive to racial bias and stereotypes within the American culture. For example, **Margaret Smith's** mother portrayed Aunt Jemima for a marketing campaign but soon faced disapproval from her family and friends.*

My mother worked advertising Aunt Jemima pancakes. She was very pretty and it was one of the easy ways for her to get some extra money because she stood up there and made pancakes. This was when they first came out, when they first came to Oberlin. But she had to stop because black people came along and said, "Isn't this terrible, degrading us?" And my brother said: "Please stop, I'm embarrassed."

A Reluctant Pioneer

***Elizabeth Thomas** paved the way for the employment of African American women in the Oberlin public schools in the 1940s.*

Several black people in Oberlin had gone to the superintendent and said they wanted a black teacher. I guess the School Board wasn't sure whether Oberlin was ready for this. The superintendent felt that it was only fair to have a black teacher teach only black children. I didn't agree. I told him I didn't like the idea, but then I went home and talked it over with my father. He said, "Well, that's a step in the right direction. At least a black teacher would be hired."

I accepted the job, but not very willingly. The main reason I took it was because I knew my father wasn't very well. I think he had a premonition he wasn't going to be around much longer. I started teaching in September of 1940, and my father died in November of that year. So, I was very happy that I had come home to teach.

There was a sort of unwritten agreement that I would teach mostly the children who were black since it was



In the 1940s "Aunt Jemima" handed out free pancakes made from the mix of the same name. Although this work no doubt supplemented the server's household income, it was quite controversial among Oberlinians.



Centennial School was built in 1876 on South Main Street near the railroad tracks. It was used by the Kindergarten Training School from 1920 until 1933 and then served as a public grade school from 1934 until 1950. Betty Thomas taught there in the 1940s.

black people who wanted me to come to Oberlin. There were two white families in the area who did not want their children to have to walk so far to another school, so they did come to the school where I was teaching.

As I look back on it now, it seems very strange that it wasn't until 1940 that they even had a black teacher in Oberlin. I was so busy teaching and trying to help look after my father that it didn't really hit me that I was the first black teacher in Oberlin.

*Once hired, **Betty Thomas** encountered difficult working conditions.*

I taught the first and second grade combination in an old building, Centennial—on the northeast corner of South Main and Edison—that is no longer in existence. There were no other classes in the building. The Draft Board was in the other side of the building. It was very unpleasant because parents of draftees would all come to tell their sons good-bye. And here we were, with our windows facing where the buses stopped to pick up the soldiers, seeing all those tears outside. The parents were crying, the soldiers were crying, and so were my kids.

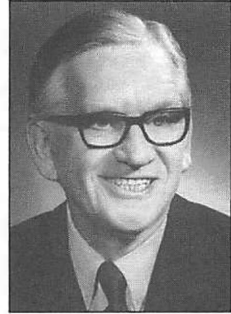
Well, this only lasted one year. That year, some of the black parents objected. They got out a petition asking either that the teaching be in another building or that the class be integrated.

Two years later, Betty received broader community support.

After I had taught for two years, there was a question of whether I would be hired for the third year. After three years a teacher automatically got tenure, and I guess, for some reason, the board wasn't going to give me tenure. I remember getting some feedback that if I had tenure, then we would have to hire other black teachers and, as one woman said, "They might not all be like Betty," which I thought was a very poor excuse.

There was quite a to-do about it. Chuck Mosher, the editor and publisher of the *Oberlin News-Tribune*, wrote

two editorials about Betty's case. He didn't know me at all at that time, but he went out on a limb for me. Then, another petition was gotten up by the black community and circulated throughout the town, and many people signed it. My mother, unbeknown to me, had contacted many of the parents of the children I'd had. She went to the School Board meeting and said that parents were satisfied and that the only reason she could see that they were not rehiring me for tenure was because of my color. And so, after the board had met, the superintendent came and talked to me. I was going to be rehired and put on tenure. He just wanted to be sure that my mother was loyal to the Oberlin public schools.



Charles Mosher,
date unknown

Calls for Action

***Betty Spurlock** experienced segregation whenever she traveled between her home in Virginia and her mother's home in Oberlin between 1937 and 1942.*

When I traveled back and forth between Richmond, Virginia, and Cleveland, things were segregated. I would get in a special coach in Richmond. We paid the same price. That is what I objected to so much. It wasn't separate but equal because we didn't have air conditioning in our coaches like the other people did. Then, when you got to Washington, you could transfer and sit anywhere you wanted to on the B&O from Washington to Cleveland. Going back, it would be the same way. We would be all right until you got to Washington, and then you had to get into a segregated coach. It was just the law, and you had to do it, unless you were brave like Rosa Parks. I wasn't.

Although Betty would not break the law, she made her voice heard by uniting with others in organizations, such as the



Florene Worcester joined some Prospect School students for a breath of fresh air in the spring of 1957.

*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP supported a number of successful class-action suits, most notably *Brown v. Board of Education*, that forced the desegregation of schools. Sensitive to possible racial imbalance created by predominantly black neighborhoods in the*

*southeast quadrant of Oberlin, the Oberlin School District abolished neighborhood schools in 1959, assigned children to schools by grade level, and instituted busing of children to the various elementary schools. **Florene Worcester**, principal of Prospect School, described the reorganization plan from her viewpoint as a school administrator.*

When it was first introduced, Mr. Duncan [the superintendent] approached us. The parents were not accepting it at all, and we dropped it for a time. Then, several years later, it was reintroduced, and apparently the parents who had originally objected to it accepted it, so the change turned out very well.

We felt that there would be a conservation of materials that could be shared by anywhere from four to six classrooms. We also felt that if all of the first grades were together and all of the second grades and so on, all of the children would be exposed to pretty much the same type of teaching. It could be better supervised than it was when one side of town was doing what they thought should be done and the other side doing something else. It came just prior to the big push for nonsegregated schools. So, we were completely nonsegregated when that push came.

6. CHANGING TIMES

Fighting for Peace and Justice

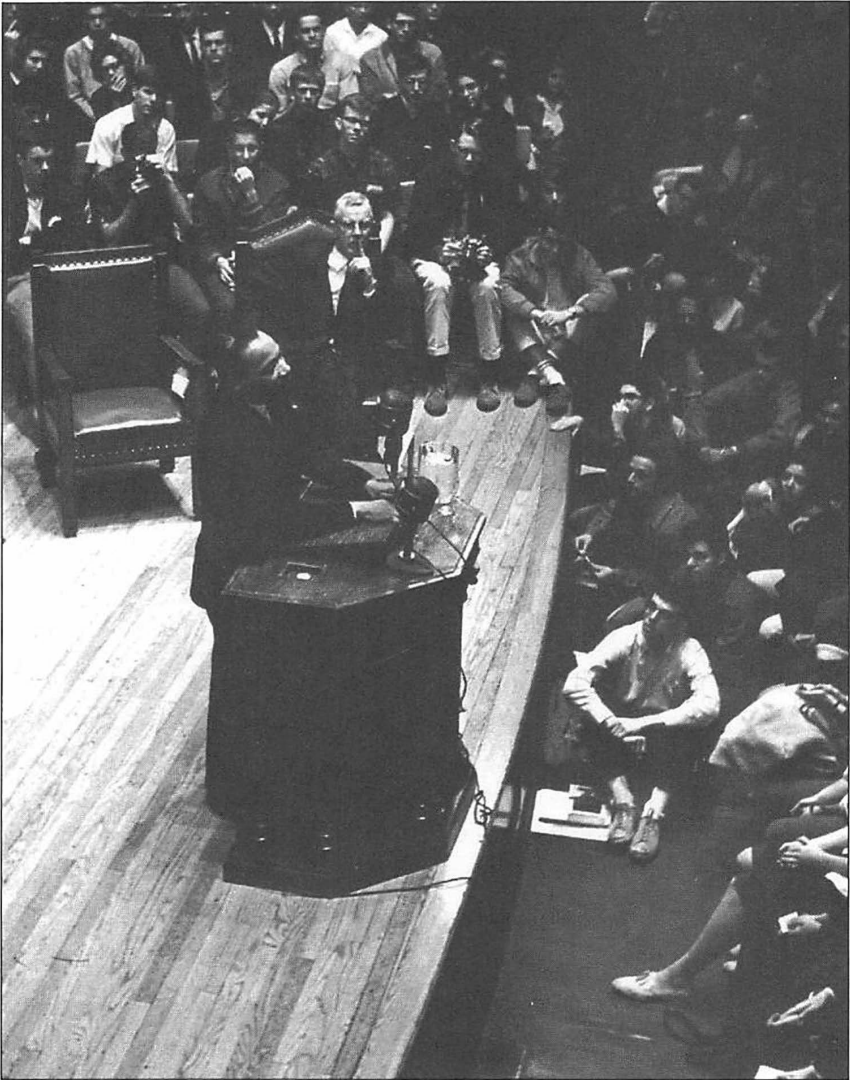
*The U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1957, two years after Rosa Parks' arrest for refusing to give her seat on a bus to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. It took another three years for President Dwight D. Eisenhower to sign the act into law. As dissatisfaction with the pace of change grew, women joined men in marches in Washington, and acts of civil disobedience became more frequent. **Margaret Smith** commented on the role of violence in these efforts.*

As much as I want peace, and I really love peace, this little part of me says, "If the only way you can get people to notice is through violence, then I'm not going to go out and do it, but I'm not going to condemn everybody that does."

In the sixties they had Martin Luther King marching, and we had the Panthers. Now, Martin Luther King did a great job, but if he hadn't had some of that violence too, to stir up some of this, we would not be where we are today. That's the way I feel about both the peace movement and women's rights. I want them. I'm for them. But I can't join them.

*The 1960s were a time of social and political upheaval, as issues of racism, poverty, and war gripped the nation. The war in Vietnam was raging, and college students, including those in Oberlin, were mounting demonstrations and picketing military recruiters on campus. **Mildred Arthrell** shared her feelings about the situation.*

I think Oberlin is very into being aware of what's going on. I remember one time a group of Oberlin students had



Oberlin College's Finney Chapel was filled to overflowing when the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. addressed the community in 1964.



Oberlin students surrounded a Navy recruiter in his car during an October 26, 1967 protest against the war in Vietnam.



In November 1972 student protesters marched eastward along College Street, then turned south on Main Street en route to City Hall.

surrounded a Navy recruiter's car, and he couldn't get out of his car for most of the day. But it never came to what it did at Kent State University. I know there were meetings, and I think there was a big bonfire about protesting the bombing of Cambodia. The students were vocal, but Oberlin was smaller. At Kent, it was a very large place.



Marion Kelly, in 1955

*Although no arrests ensued from the confrontation of students with the Navy recruiter in October 1967, the incident gained national media attention. **Marion Kelly**, the Oberlin correspondent for the Cleveland Plain Dealer at that time, related a conversation with one of her children.*

I had one kid calling me from Hiram College saying, "Mother, can you please get our story out. We've closed down and we've gone on strike. We haven't captured the administration building, but we've just sort of struck for a day. Couldn't you please help us get some attention in the *Plain Dealer*?"

And I said, "Not unless you do something drastic like capture the Navy recruiters, which Oberlin has done."



Jeanne Bay, in 1978

*High school students also wanted their voices to be heard. **Jeanne Bay**, a new teacher at Oberlin High School in 1969, described a student protest during her first week of classes.*

I was in the cafeteria study hall where all the windows opened out into the front hall, and we had a major sit-in. Stacks and stacks of kids were out there, and they were having kind of a good time. Nevertheless, there was a certain amount of menace in the air. The principal and some of the other administrators were going around with their cameras, taking pictures to verify

who was there. It was a combination really of a certain amount of racial tensions certainly, but that wasn't the only thing. It was many, many students who felt that the age of authority needed to come to an end, that they needed to have a lot more say about what happened to them and what went on.

Lee Wood, another Oberlin schoolteacher, summed up this turbulent era of protests.

We really were a product of the late 1960s and 1970s, when the whole country was in unrest. Oberlin was just a microcosm of what the United States was going through in education at that time: trying to deal with the unrest of students, the change of clothes, the change of hairstyles, the demands of what teachers ought to be, the defiance of parents, and the authoritarianism of parenting. This hit the Oberlin schools. Because of the diverse community that we are, there were just all sorts of problems that occurred in schools, between the kids, between the kids and the administration. It was a time when everybody was having difficulty dealing with the unrest.



Lee Wood, in 1987

Protests were not new in Oberlin. Even during World War II Margaret Schauffler refused to pay taxes, as an expression of her objections to the war effort.

I joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which was a religious pacifist group seeking to bring people together, reconciling people, and



Margaret Schauffler, date unknown

working to have people living a type of life that was non-violent as opposed to living with revenge, war, and violence. In the late 1940s I refused to pay my taxes for four years because the taxes were being used for war and defense during World War II. They garnished my wages and got the money, which I regretted, but I couldn't help that. But I did feel as if I had made my witness opposing war. There were a few others who belonged to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, but I was one of the few on the faculty. My sister was very much opposed to my stand, but my coworkers were pretty understanding.

*Sadly, war did not end with the conflicts in Europe and Asia. Fighting in the Middle East continued to make the headlines. **Jeanne Pease**, wife of U.S. Congressman Donald Pease (D-Ohio, 1977–1993), hoped that peace was at hand with the signing of the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Accord.*

It was so exciting seeing Begin and Sadat when President Jimmy Carter was working on the peace process. I was fascinated to watch the process. I used to sit in Congress often with Mrs. Eldon Rudd, whose husband was a conservative Republican U.S. representative from Arizona [1977–1987]. Sometimes we couldn't see the voting lights on the wall, but if one of us could see our own husband's, we knew the other one voted the other way.

*However, peace remained elusive, while Oberlinians stayed vigilant. **Marion Kelly** and **Hope Hibbard** attended a rally at the United Nations headquarters in New York City in 1982 to support nuclear disarmament. Eighty-nine-year-old Hope explained:*

Whenever my presence will help anything, I am very apt to go along, if possible. I understood that there was to be a rally in New York, and I thought that maybe an extra person there would help. We rode the bus all night. I took a folding camp stool under my arm, and we sat a great deal of the time in New York, waiting for something to happen.



Jeanne and Don Pease and their daughter, Jennifer, ca. the late 1980s.

After a whole day there, we came home, overnight. So, it was two night's trip, and one day in New York.

Delores Carter's words remain poignant today, even though they were recorded twenty-five years ago.

If you look around the world today, some of the most horrible things are being inflicted on human beings in the name of their god. Sometimes when they even have the same god, they are killing each other. I think that the religious furor and the bias of religious groups in today's world—what they are doing in the name of their gods—is unbelievable.

We are now becoming a planetary world, and we're going to have to deal with people of all kinds of colors and ethnic backgrounds. If you can't interrelate with them,

you are lost. You are just lost. That's all there is to it. What we do individually by our performance in day-to-day interrelationships is what is going to make the difference.

The War on Poverty

*While the United States was fighting a war in Southeast Asia, it was also fighting a national war on poverty. A number of domestic programs resulting from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were established to eliminate poverty and racial injustice. One of these programs was Head Start. The Oberlin Head Start was the first one in Lorain County. **Marlene Merrill** explained how it began and described her experience as teacher and director of the program in its initial years.*

The League of Women Voters in Oberlin had a research project focused on how preschool children were cared for when their mothers worked. I was very involved in this study. It included interviewing a lot of grandmothers and a number of working moms to see what and how their children and grandchildren were being handled during working hours. So, when President Johnson came out with his poverty program, we had a lot of information that could simply fit into the questionnaires that came from people who were interested in developing a Head Start program.

When I came to Oberlin, I had never lived in a place where there were as many African American people, and I certainly didn't know the community, but somehow or other, teaching in the Head Start program fit my preparations in college and graduate school. I went into it not having any idea of what I was going to learn. What I learned, of course, was to meet and know some incredible children and their parents, to feel enormous affection for them and what they were going through, and wanting to make it better.

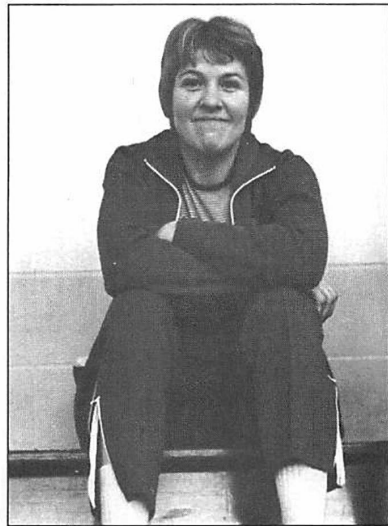
Despite good intentions, racial issues arose. Marly continued:

By about the third year, it may have been, when I was directing it, I learned that a couple of our African American teachers were being chastised by their neighbors for working in what they regarded as a white program. It came as a terrible shock. It was the first time, as a staff, that I felt there were real problems that surpassed dealing with "What are we going to do next week?" or "What are we going to do about Jimmy?" Instead, these were things that were hurting these teachers' sense of themselves and their sense of their allegiance to the program. That was one of the reasons I stepped down as director of the Head Start program in Oberlin in 1968.

Growing Awareness of Feminism

*Eliminating racial inequality and poverty were not the only objectives of government legislation. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 targeted gender discrimination in the schools. **Sue Brady**, a physical education teacher and coach in the Oberlin schools, was responsible for the difficult task of implementing the law.*

Title IX made a big difference in the school system. I was there in the beginning and right through the whole mess. Classes that were single gender became coed. So my health classes became mixed. Good and bad, we had to live with it. Sports were different. The girls had a tremendous intramural program that got pushed aside for the inter-scholastic program. Coaches were paid \$200. You



Sue Brady, in 1974

were expected to do everything. You had to do the scheduling—the coaching, the buses, getting the officials. You had to do everything: make uniforms, wash cars, and raise money. But it made a real difference.

*Even prior to legislation requiring gender equality, more women were entering the workforce, requiring decisions that affected the balance between their careers and personal lives. **Marion Kelly** found herself in the position of changing her career path to better accommodate her family's needs after the death of her husband. Her words imply a psychological as well as physical separation between her employment and her maternal responsibilities.*

I had ended up at the YWCA as a director of public relations in 1959 because I had to make enough money to support five kids at home. I could not be living a life that a newspaperwoman lived. I did not go back to a newspaper, but I did that freelance. I had a column in the *Plain Dealer* called "The Working Mother," for a long time, so that took care of my writing skills. But I had to make enough income so that I could commute and hire somebody to be with my kids all during that time. So, my life in Oberlin and my life in Cleveland were quite far apart. I was a career woman in Cleveland and a mother at home.

*To some extent, **Mary Joy** had difficulty breaking stereotypes surrounding her career and personal life. She sometimes felt slighted by men in her elected position as clerk of Russia Township, yet she also felt isolated from the social concerns of women of her day.*

I feel, as a township official elected by the people, that I am a servant of the people. I feel that I must be available at all times to try to answer their questions, and if I don't know the answer, to direct them to someone who will be helpful to them. Therefore, people often speak to me at a party or social gathering about a township problem.

Because my meetings are generally business meetings with men, my social life with women is somewhat limited.

I have never felt comfortable with little chitchat kinds of conversation with women. A lot of women seem to float in their conversations and don't get into depth. I don't believe in gossip, and I'm not particularly concerned about styles or soap operas. On the other hand, occasionally my position as township clerk is construed as that of an office girl by men—that I should make coffee and run errands.

Mary Joy continued, voicing her conflict with the growing feminist movement.

Equal pay for equal work is something that I do believe in. But I also believe that a woman's responsibility in the community and in the family has to be different than a man's. Our physical endurance is different. Even the way our muscles are attached to our bones is different. The way women think is different from the way men think.

I would say that I'm probably not a proponent of the feminist movement, although I object very strongly to any suggestion of sexual harassment. I find that very crude and unnecessary. It isn't ladylike to be militant. You can be secure in what you are trying to accomplish and remain feminine while trying to accomplish it. But it may take longer.

*Whereas Mary Joy appeared to be ambivalent toward the issues facing the feminist movement, **Delores Carter** spoke of what she saw as the negative effects of a woman's career on family and society.*

You can talk about career development and all of that, but I guess I have to go along with Katherine Hepburn. She never had any doubt that if she was going to be an actress, she was going to be an actress and that she would not have a family. The idea of splitting yourself and doing both meant that the children were paying. So, you then have all kinds of psychiatrists and neurotic specialists. After the kids are badly damaged, then we look around for remedies. If we followed Mother Nature's laws, we wouldn't get the kinks in the first place.



Delores Carter, above and below (second from the left, pointing) served on the Oberlin School Board from 1988 until 1990.



*Changes in the social structure of the family accompanied women's increased financial and personal independence. Although divorce was uncommon in the 1900s, the national divorce rate tripled by 1950, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It peaked in the 1980s before declining but never returned to pre-1970 rates. **Mary Joy** commented on the rise in the divorce rate.*

I think that there has been such a change in the family situation in my lifetime. As I was growing up, there were few divorces in the neighborhood. People who were involved in a divorce were almost ostracized from the society or pitied. It was not a common thing. Today, there are more divorces in every family and every community, and they're very destructive to the community, not only to the family.

In general, young people of my generation felt that they didn't have a lot of choices and fell into a pattern of doing what was expected of them. They then remained in that pattern and were content. Young people today, and even people my age, are more aware of other options in their lives, and they make choices that sometimes are really beneficial, but sometimes they are very selfish and destroy other people in making those choices.

*Despite disagreement over the impact of feminism on careers and families, younger generations of women were becoming more vocal. One of them, **Ann Fuller**, arrived in Oberlin in 1970 as the wife of the college's tenth and youngest president, Robert Fuller. With a doctorate in plasma physics from Columbia University and as a faculty member in Oberlin's Department of Mathematics, she wanted to redefine her role by working to improve the status of women who were employed by or otherwise connected with the college.*

According to historian Marlene Merrill, the four years of the Fuller presidency were tumultuous at Oberlin, just as they were in other American colleges and universities. The couple's private lives were difficult too: Robert Fuller resigned in 1974; Ann Fuller's faculty appointment lasted only one year; the couple soon separated and were later divorced. Ann decided to remain in Oberlin with her two children and to begin rebuilding her life along a different career path by taking a "job" in 1978 as a half-time caseworker for what is today Oberlin Community Services.

I went from being the president's wife to going into a sort of oblivion; then rebuilding my life and trying to figure out what to do with it. I worked for many years in this job,

just working quietly and doing what was required with really no recognition.

Her job became a career, where she was able to meld community activism and feminism. For twenty-eight years she provided the guidance and drive to evolve the organization from a small volunteer group of citizens to a professionally managed agency with services within Oberlin and extending into southern Lorain County. Ann was finally recognized not only for her outstanding work with the agency but also for the founding and subsequent leadership of the Oberlin College Committee on the Status of Women. Ann expressed her feelings after receiving Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community in 1991.



Ann Fuller, in 1991

I felt totally rehabilitated. It had taken seventeen years of rehabilitation since Bob had left and I was in disgrace. And here I was: standing in front of the whole community and being honored at commencement in front of all these parents, these students, this faculty, all the people who wouldn't talk to me when Bob left. They were all there.

Although I never sought or even wanted recognition, this was a very emotionally healing time. I think it meant that I was a person on my own. I wasn't anybody's anything. I wasn't anybody's child. I wasn't anybody's wife. I was myself. I had a career. It wasn't the career that I wanted to have before, you know, but it was what I had. It was my career and my work. It was my life, and somebody had noticed it.

7. GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Civic Engagement

*A desire for social change led some Oberlin women to become active in community organizations and civic groups. Participation in organizations such as the League of Women Voters brought issues of concern to the attention of the public. Oberlin faculty member **Hope Hibbard** was instrumental in reorganizing the league's Oberlin chapter in 1936. By then her political activity was increasing in response to gender discrimination in her own profession.*

I've always enjoyed keeping track of political activities in the country. The League of Women Voters is one of the best organizations, I think, to keep you informed of what's going on and give you a place where you can really do something about it. If you're going to help at all in our democracy, it's important to know what you're doing. As a matter of fact, for many years we—the League—organized political candidates' meetings. The job has been taken over by various other organizations, but I presided over many meetings when various candidates up for election presented their cases. We managed to give them the opportunity to show what they were planning to do and how well they might do it.



Hope Hibbard, date unknown

When **Shirley R. Johnson** moved to Oberlin in 1947, she was surprised to find that the town seemed like a bedrock of conservatism compared with Oberlin College's reputation and also in contrast to her previous experiences at liberal Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. A civil libertarian, she soon committed herself to creating and maintaining openness and citizen participation in local government. Beginning around 1958, Shirley R. and Oberlin activist Bill Long, along with two newspaper reporters, began to regularly attend School Board meetings.



Shirley R. Johnson,
in 2010

A heated School Board election was in the works, and considerable conflict, charges, and countercharges were in the news. A teacher friend asked me to go to a School Board meeting to see what was going on. School Board meetings were held on the second floor of what's now Langston Middle School [at 153 North Main Street]. It was an awesome experience for a town newcomer to walk into that meeting room. Visitors weren't expected—or welcomed. You were on your own as to what to do or expect, and I don't remember agendas or any information being available. I guess the whole thing got my dander up.

Shirley R. maintained her drive and a willingness to do the serious work of ensuring that school officials followed an open process as well as the letter and spirit of Ohio's sunshine laws.

Eventually, we were instrumental in making a stand or statement for open School Board meetings. I think the presence of observers and people who speak up makes a difference, and I feel fairly certain that through the years, School Board policies have been written with more understanding of the importance and significance of openness and individual rights and civil liberties.

Jeanne Pease had firsthand experience with local, state and national politics. Her husband, Donald, was elected to Oberlin City Council [1961–1964] and the Ohio Senate [1965–1967] and House of Representatives [1969–1975] before being voted into the U.S. House of Representatives [1977–1993]. As the “woman behind the man,” Jeanne campaigned while juggling the demands of motherhood and maintaining a house in Oberlin.

I don't think we discussed Don's being in politics all that much until 1964, when Tom Flynn, who was a government professor at Oberlin, asked Don if he would run for the Ohio Senate. It was a seat that was held by a Republican and it was a Republican district. But the Lorain County Democratic Party was looking for someone who would run. This would have been late in 1963. It was just about the same time that I thought that I might be pregnant for the first time. So we really discussed how it would affect a child and how we would manage. Don just said that we would always come first. He knew he would be very busy, but he always called every night when he was in Columbus. He saved every Saturday morning for our daughter, Jennifer, and she came with us to pancake breakfasts and spaghetti suppers.

Campaigning was just part of our life. I don't think that I was ever envious or angry that Don was in political life. We met people and did things that we never would have been able to do any other way. So I just took care of everything at home and kept everything going and went with Don as much as I could.

Jeanne was also Don's link to the community.

When Don went back into the Ohio House in 1969, people didn't want to make long-distance calls to Columbus, so they often would call me when they knew he was going to be in Columbus. One lady always called about the same time, just before dinnertime, because she knew I would be home with Jennifer. She had a very strong interest in

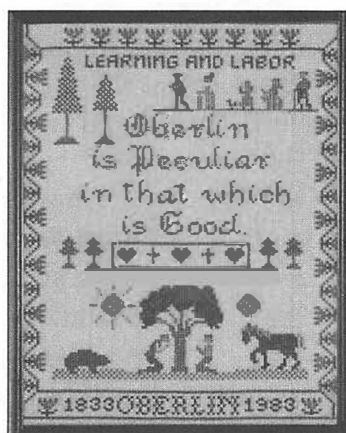
legislation affecting her deaf son, and she wanted sign language available as well as being able to read lips. And she would call me and just tell me all about it, knowing that I would tell Don. So, I got a lot of calls those first few years. I think that's probably when I also began to go up-town for coffee. About ten o'clock in the morning, Jennifer and I would go up. It would give me time to see people but also to get away from the phone.

Stewardship

Sigrid Boe focused her energies on the beautification of Oberlin's public spaces and improvement of recreational facilities. Her activities started relatively small, with organizing a team of volunteers to sweep the downtown area and plant tulip bulbs in street containers.

I was brought up to be a good steward. You can't just take without giving back to your community. I grew up in Germany—a beautiful country. When I came to Oberlin I was a little disappointed to see that, instead of the real flowers I was used to in Germany, some people would put plastic flowers in their garden. So I decided that Oberlin could be a much better and more beautiful community.

Soon after this, Sigrid took it upon herself to lobby neighbors, Oberlin City Council members, contractors, and funders to restore the Morgan Street reservoir and to establish a bicycle path along an abandoned railroad track.



In the late twentieth century a group of enterprising Oberlin women created and sold a series of sampler kits under the name "Oberlin X-Stitch." Eight of the samplers, including the completed one shown here, come from a ca. 1834 Oberlin College rule book.

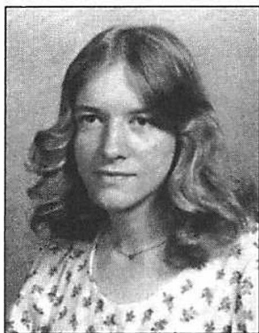


The 3-mile-long Don J. Pease Memorial Bike Path, which traverses Oberlin, is part of the North Coast Inland Trail.

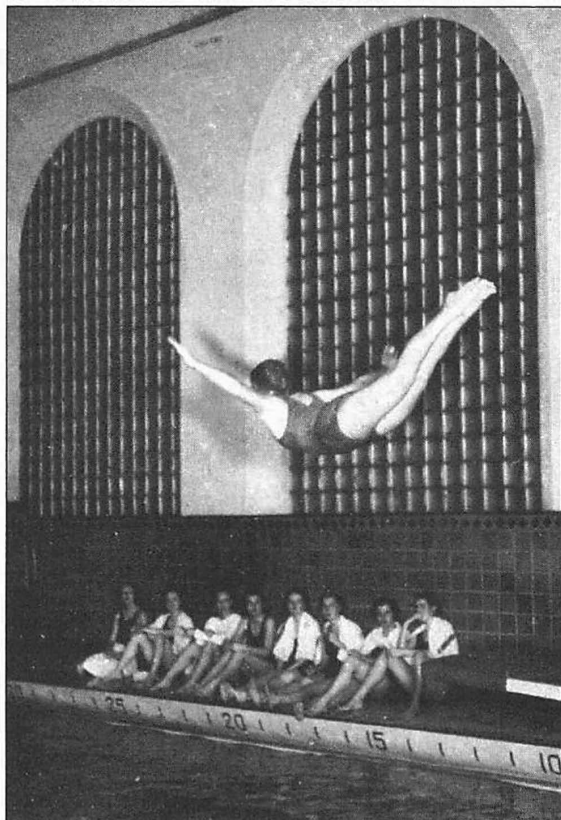
The reservoir on Morgan Street was used for many, many years by people in the community and students. You weren't supposed to be swimming there, but students did. The Oberlin Golf Club was very eager to buy the whole property, but we collected 2,000 signatures in opposition to the purchase. We raised more than \$80,000 because the stipulation was that, if we were going to save the reservoir and have access to it, there had to be an access road for emergency vehicles. This was basically what we raised the money for. We had lots of help: Bruce Brotherton from Browning-Ferris Industries committed to doing the access road; Doran Portman, to cutting down trees; and Hank Annable, to building the benches. A lot of people helped. Also, City Council was trying very, very hard. They were going to get \$120,000 if they could sell this land to the Golf Club. One hundred and twenty thousand dollars doesn't even pave a street, and it would have been gone forever. And now we also have the Olive Carson Nature Preserve adjacent to the reservoir.

The bike path was already in the works when I joined the Open Space Commission [an Advisory Committee to Oberlin City Council]. There was a lot of opposition from the people living along the proposed path, and City Council, of course, listened to the community. But I asked every City Council member to just walk the abandoned railroad and see how beautiful it is. Why should it be kept from the rest of the people? We got 100 percent funding for this. It wasn't easy, but we accomplished it.

*The community also needed a swimming pool. Crane Pool, built in 1931 by Oberlin College for its female students, was the only available option in town. It was primarily intended for college use, but sometimes was opened to the community. **Susan Schubert** described swimming there in the 1960s.*



Susan Schubert, in 1976



Oberlin College's Crane Pool, built for its co-eds, was also enjoyed by the community at large for almost sixty years.

There was no place to swim unless you went to Finley State Park or up to Lake Erie. There was no pool, except for the college's Crane Pool, and it was packed. We'd sit up in the balcony and accidentally drop a shoe or a flip-flop down on somebody. We spent, from what I can remember, every waking hour there. If Mom and Dad had the money, we were standing in line, pushing, shoving, and getting back into that water. Everybody was in the water, every color, every race. Everybody was in there.

*Oberlin College closed Crane Pool in 1993 due to the prohibitive costs of maintenance and repairs. This left the community without a place to swim. Once again **Sigrid Boe** assessed the situation and became a catalyst for change.*

We knew that the community had wanted a swimming facility since the sixties. We presented a plan to City Council, and basically, they just laughed at us. They said, "We remember when a council person said that this plan wouldn't sell a stove to an Eskimo." But we did continue until a lot of other things came into play: a new college president and talk about redoing Crane Pool, which we thought would never be sufficient for community use. I got a committee together, and we just kept pursuing and working. I did personally go over to Eric Nord's house and said, "Eric, I have to tell you about this idea of Crane Pool. This is not for the community. It's not going to work. We have to come up with something better." Crane Pool wasn't big enough. There was no outside area. There was no parking area. It was right in the middle of the College community.

Sigrid knew that community decisions needed to consider the resources and goals of both the city and the college, and she persisted with a plan to bring them together.

I read in the paper that the Metro Parks got together with the city of Amherst, Ohio, for a joint park, and I said, "Okay. This is what we need to do." I talked to Dan Martin, the director of Lorain County Metro Parks. I knew where

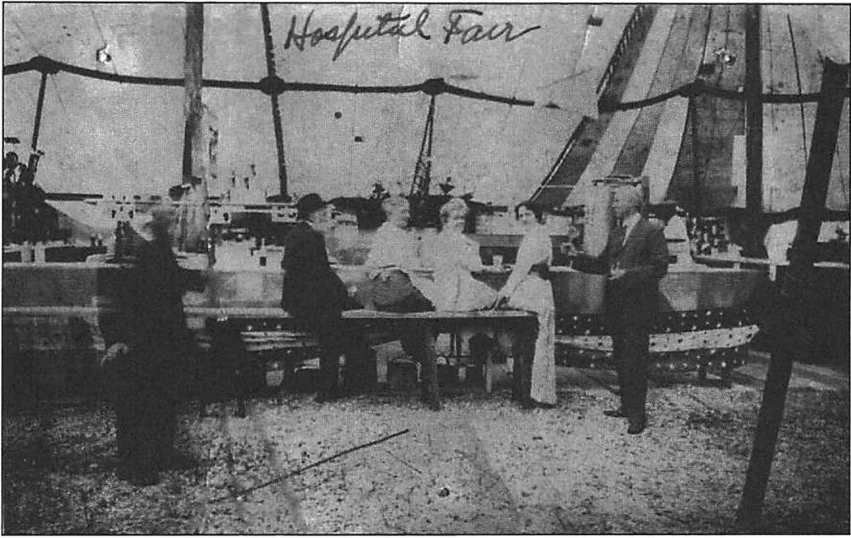


In 2001 the Splash Zone Aquatic Center opened at 95 West Hamilton Street, as part of the Lorain County Metro Parks system.

the fields were, and where the city property was that we could use. I took him over there. I had breakfast with Eric Nord, and I said, “Eric, this is the thing to do. Let’s do it with the Metro Parks.” One of Eric’s biggest fears was that this couldn’t be managed by the city, that it had to be managed by a bigger entity. So with the Metro Parks, the whole idea came into play. The county commissioners contributed \$500,000, Oberlin College contributed \$500,000, and the city passed a levy. Actually, the community really came together and had the highest amount of “Yes” votes for any levy that the city has ever passed, as far as I know.

Philanthropy

*Over the years Oberlin women were also active in community projects in health care, education, and the arts. As far back as 1912, volunteer efforts by Oberlin women helped purchase land for a new hospital. **Helen Johnson** joined the Women’s Auxiliary of Allen Hospital in the 1940s.*



Even in its mutilated condition, this 1912 photograph conveys the mood that prevailed at the first fair held to raise money for a new hospital in Oberlin.

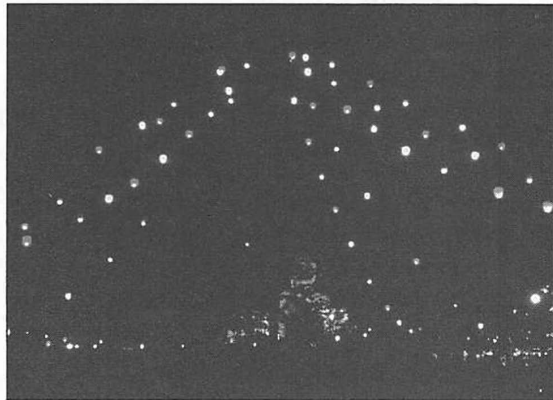
We moved here in '43, and I don't think we'd been here three months when someone called me on the phone and asked me if I would join the Women's Auxiliary of the hospital. I said, "I certainly would." I was very interested in it. Then, three months later, I found myself elected treasurer. Well, I never got unelected, and for twenty-five years I was the treasurer of the Allen Hospital Auxiliary.

When we started the gift shop, Patricia Stetson and I made the initial trip to Lorain to a wholesale company to buy the original stock, that was minimal and tended a lot toward being pharmaceutical products. It was for people who are in the hospital and who don't have toothpaste and that kind of thing. Then I just got involved in the shop. I kept the books for it for twenty-five years and helped with the buying. I went to Columbus to the big gift shows twice a year for years to buy stock for the gift shop.

The hospital bazaar was also a big deal. It was always at the James Brand House [at First Church], and we had booths—a baked-goods booth, a white elephant booth, a handicraft booth, and a candy shop. We had a captain for

each booth, and she was responsible for getting the materials to make that booth successful. It was very successful, and we had one of those every year for I don't know how long. We'd have one and get it over with, and then immediately start on plans for the next one. It took a lot of months to get everything in line and try to find something new each time to interest people in it so it wasn't the same old thing over and over. Back in those days, we used to make between \$4,000 and \$6,000. In today's money, this would be \$24,000, \$25,000, or \$26,000. We did very well with our bazaars. It was well worth all our time and effort, and we enjoyed it, for it was not only a moneymaker, it was also a social occasion. There was a camaraderie there that you didn't find anywhere else. We liked sitting around at ten o'clock in the morning with a cup of coffee and planning and that kind of thing, and we all became very close.

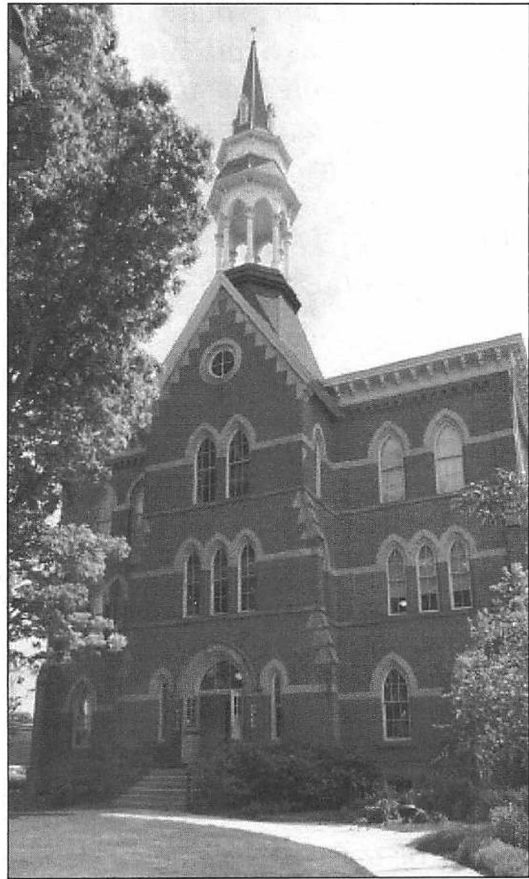
The Hospital Auxiliary continues to raise funds for the construction of new medical facilities and equipment by sponsoring an annual pie social on the eve of Oberlin College's graduation exercises. Oberlin residents join college students, their parents, and alumni celebrating in Tappan Square under the light of Japanese lanterns.



Illumination night on Tappan Square, in the heart of both town and gown, 1949.

Jane Nord chose to champion Oberlin's thriving arts community. As an artist herself, she was especially supportive of the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts, an organization dedicated to enhancing public appreciation and participation in the visual arts. Jane also provided the

The Nord Family Foundation restored Oberlin's former Union School, and in 1996 the building was dedicated as the New Union Center for the Arts. It now houses the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts and other arts organizations.



In 1997 Jane and Eric Nord received the Governor's Art Award.



crucial leadership to adapt and renovate the historic former Union School on South Main Street, built in 1874, into the New Union Center for the Arts, which opened in 1996 and which is a thriving center for the visual and performing arts. Many nonprofit organizations in Oberlin and Lorain County also benefit from her family's generosity through personal gifts, The Nord Family Foundation, and also through Nordson Corporation Foundation.

Life brings many things, and you have to decide which way you're going. I understand what an artist goes through, and I can help facilitate what they need: a place to work and the wherewithal to work. I can't help all artists, but the role of helping is important for me.

Marrying somebody who developed a company that started all of these foundations has changed my life. It's almost made this a priority. It isn't all of my life, but it's a large chunk of it. I think we felt that we were so blessed with so much that we wanted to affect our community in a way that really made a difference.



*Voices of these Oberlin women still echo throughout the city—within families, schools, businesses, and boardrooms. Through their lives and shared wisdom, the city of Oberlin has grown and prospered. **Sigrid Boe** may well have reflected the sentiments of the many women who gave their time, talents, and resources to Oberlin over the years, often without great appreciation or recognition.*

I hope I've done just a little bit of my job here on earth: to make this a better community.

Appendix A

ORAL HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Oberlin Heritage Center's Oberlin Oral History Project is an important collection of interviews that document Oberlinians' lives and the history of the community throughout the twentieth century and beyond. This ongoing project reflects the dedication of many community members who have worked to collect and preserve the town's history over the course of more than three decades.

The beginnings of the Oberlin Oral History Project date to 1979. During that year African American Oberlin residents, including Foster and Edith Bows, Blanche Pettiford Fox, Marvin Kolb, Minnie Louise Rucker, Robert Thomas, and Archibald Tuck, were interviewed about their lives as part of a project undertaken by an Oberlin College graduate, Peter Way, with the assistance of community residents such as Marlene ("Marly") Merrill and Marvyl Fields, for a local, short-lived nonprofit organization, Youth Services.

Six of the interviews were later incorporated into the Oberlin Oral History project that began in 1981 under the auspices of the City of Oberlin Historic Preservation Commission. That ambitious project was led by Allan Patterson, a local teacher, together with local historian/teacher Mildred Arthrell, historian Marly Merrill, teachers Dina Schoonmaker and Priscilla Steinberg, and many other community volunteers. Between 1982 and 1988 they held training sessions for interviewers and conducted interviews of ninety-five Oberlin senior citizens, many of whom had ties to pre-Civil War African American families who had settled in Oberlin, and others of diverse backgrounds. Most had lived in Oberlin for many years. Standard questions were sometimes asked, but the interviews vary considerably in depth, length, and quality of the audiotape recording. Some individuals were interviewed multiple times. As can easily happen with any such project, volunteer participation waxed and waned, and by 1988 the project had ended.

In 1993 Patricia Murphy was hired to direct the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization (OHIO), now known as the Oberlin Heritage Center (OHC). In exploring its collections and files and beginning to develop a plan to revitalize and professionalize the organization, she discovered an array of oral history files in the dining room closet of the

Monroe House, site of OHIO's offices. Pat soon realized that the interviews contained a wealth of information about the community's history, much of it not otherwise recorded. Some of the interviews had been transcribed; others had not. Some had signed release forms; others did not. She recruited several volunteers and student interns to begin work to assess and organize the oral history collection so that the information could be preserved and shared with the public, the interviewees' families, and scholars. Some of the first volunteers in the mid-1990s included Kendal at Oberlin residents Sara Carter Balogh, Mary Augustine, and Susan Simonson. OHIO showcased the project in its first oral history-based public program, "Growing Up in Oberlin," which was presented at the Monroe House in July 1994.

The Oral History Committee was formed in 2000. Some of its members had been involved in conducting interviews in the 1980s; others were new to the project. Marly Merrill, Dina Schoonmaker, and Priscilla Steinberg served as cochairs of the committee from 2000 to 2003; Marly chaired it from 2004 to 2006; and Dina chaired it from 2006 to 2011. They provided important guidance and structure to the project, aided by OHIO/OHC staff liaison genealogist Pat Holsworth (retired) and subsequently by Museum Education and Tour Coordinator Liz Schultz, as well as numerous volunteers and student interns. The committee initially focused on organizing and completing the editing and transcribing of the ninety-five interviews conducted between 1979 and 1988 (now called "Series I"). They also worked to present excerpts of the interviews in several public programs on topics, such as "Fun in Oberlin—Past and Present," "Oberlin Memories of the War Years," and "Stories from Oberlin in the 1930s and 1940s." Noted Ohio oral historian Rachel Barber worked with the committee to incorporate excerpts of many of the interviews in the acclaimed Wallpaper Project's "From Here: A Century of Voices from Ohio," a theatrical production that traveled throughout Ohio as part of its bicentennial in 2003, including a performance at the First Church in Oberlin by OHC volunteers.

In 2001 the Oral History Committee began work on a new series of interviews, "Series II," which now includes forty-one completed interviews. Among the key individuals who have been most active in the work of the Oral History Committee in the past decade are Camille Hamlin Allen, Fran Baumann, Richard Baznik, Ellen Broadwell, Ann Fuller, Roberta Garcia, Nancy Gray, Ken Grossi, Pat Holsworth, Jeanne McKibben, Marly Merrill, Dina Schoonmaker, Jean Simon, Priscilla Steinberg, and Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick. They have written prefaces to summarize the content of the interviews (available on the OHC website, <www.oberlin-heritage.org>), and work is under way to digitize the interviews and to conduct and transcribe additional interviews.

Appendix B

MEET THE WOMEN

The remarkable women who were kind enough to share their stories for the Oberlin Heritage Center's Oral History Project are:

Ellen Adams: Born on April 17, 1915; interviewed by Priscilla Steinberg in 2006. Born and raised in Oberlin, Ellen is the daughter of Conservatory of Music voice professors, Charles Henry Adams and Margaret Jones Adams. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1936. After attending a special course in personnel training at Harvard Business School, she became the personnel director and then associate director of New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston. Ellen returned to Oberlin upon her retirement in 1977, moved to the Kendal at Oberlin retirement community in 1993, and is still an active member of the Oberlin Heritage Center.



Mildred Arthrell (née Haulk): Born on January 6, 1913; died on December 22, 2010; interviewed by Laura Orleans in 1985. Mildred was born in Pittsfield, Ohio, and moved to Oberlin in 1932 to attend the Oberlin School of Commerce. She met and married George Arthrell in 1939, when they were both employed at the Worthington Ball Company in Elyria. She worked as a secretary prior to earning a teaching certificate in 1954. Upon graduating from Kent State University with a bachelor's degree in 1965 and a master's degree in 1970, she taught in the Oberlin public schools for eighteen years. As a locally renowned historian and storyteller, Mildred attracted large and enthusiastic audiences. Her topics included Laura Ingalls Wilder, Theodore Roosevelt, Harriet Tubman, Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery, and the Oregon Trail. Mildred was also a motivating force on the Oberlin Heritage Center's Oral History Committee.



Fran Baumann (née Minghetti): Born on January 24, 1936; interviewed by Rachel Barber in 2003. A graduate of Youngstown State University, Fran began to teach at Oberlin's Eastwood School in 1966. She was president of the Oberlin Teachers' Association (1973–1978) when

APPENDIX B: MEET THE WOMEN



has been a partner with her husband, Jack, in Vermilion Valley Vineyards, established on land owned by the Baumann family.

the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that teachers could negotiate under collective bargaining agreements. Elected to Oberlin City Council in 1994, she served as its chairperson for six of her eight years on it. Fran was also president of the Oberlin League of Women Voters, sat on the boards of Family Promise of Lorain County and Oberlin Community Services, and was a member of the Oberlin Heritage Center's Oral History Committee. Since 2007 she



for twelve years in the Music Education Division of Oberlin College. She received Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community in 1989 for being a "caring and demanding teacher, seasoned and vigorous scholar, and thoughtful and committed colleague." Jeanne was active in the League of Women Voters and the Nineteenth Century Club before moving to Alea, Hawaii. In 2013 she moved back to Oberlin.

Jeanne Bay (née Ressler): Born on January 27, 1929; interviewed by Rachel Barber in 2003. Jeanne received her bachelor's degree from Mount Union College (now the University of Mount Union), in Alliance, Ohio, in 1950 and moved to Oberlin in 1958. She taught in various schools in northeastern Ohio, including Oberlin High School from 1969 to 1988. After earning a master's degree from Cleveland State University, she taught



an advisory committee to Oberlin's City Council, and served as its chairperson from 1988 until 1997. Influential in establishing Oberlin's Boys and Girls Club and Lorain County Metro Parks' Splash Zone, Sigrid received Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community in 1994. In that same year the *Oberlin News-Tribune* named her Oberlinian of the Year, and in 2009 she was given the Oberlin Heritage Center's

Sigrid Boe (née North): Born on August 20, 1938; interviewed by Priscilla Steinberg in 2010. Sigrid was born in Germany and attended the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University and the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik, where she met her husband, David, then a Fulbright scholar and later a professor of organ and dean of the Oberlin Conservatory. The couple moved to Oberlin in 1962, and Sigrid soon became an advocate for community improvement. She joined the city's Open Space Commission, an

Keep Oberlin Beautiful Award. Sigrid served on boards of Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, Habitat for Humanity, and the Oberlin Heritage Center, and she was named an honorary trustee of the Oberlin Heritage Center.

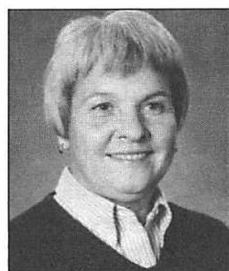
Laurine Bongiorno (née Mack): Born on April 17, 1903; died on January 23, 1988; interviewed by Ellen Enslow in 1986. Laurine came to Oberlin in 1918, when her father joined the Oberlin College faculty. Upon graduating from the college in 1925, she became the student curator of its art museum. She earned her doctorate at Radcliffe College in 1930 and taught art history at Wellesley College and the University of Chicago. Laurine returned to Oberlin and, in 1933, married Andrew Bongiorno, a member of the Oberlin College faculty and later a professor and chairman of the English Department. Laurine was appointed a lecturer in fine arts at Oberlin College in 1944. Active in acquisitions for the college's Allen Memorial Art Museum, she edited its *Bulletin* from 1950 to 1967.



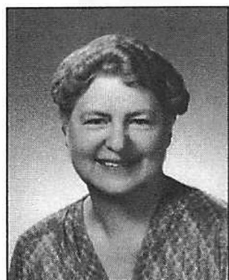
Dorothy Boyers (née Stark): Born on April 4, 1904; died on December 19, 1998; interviewed by Elizabeth Ulmer in 1988. Dorothy earned her bachelor's degree in 1925 from Ohio Wesleyan College and a master's degree in English at Oberlin College in 1931. She taught Latin and English for brief periods before and after her marriage in 1927 but viewed her calling as that of helpmate to her husband, Hayden, and his academic career in Oberlin College's French Department. From their first meeting onstage in a college student production, the theater—and light opera, in particular—filled their lives. In 1967, the Oberlin College Alumni Association recognized the Boyers for their contributions to the Gilbert and Sullivan Players' student theater productions.



Anna (Sue) Brady (née Young): Born on May 19, 1929; interviewed by Rachel Barber in 2003. Sue came to Oberlin from West Virginia in 1957, having earned a bachelor's degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College. She taught physical education for twenty-eight years in the Oberlin schools, where she also coached women's volleyball and basketball, and she officiated at both high school and college games. Sue shared her love of sports with her children and husband, Lester. Since her retirement in 1985 she has enjoyed playing golf, volunteer-



ing at Oberlin's Allen Memorial Hospital and the local Hot Meals program, and being active in the First United Methodist Church.



Mabel Justina Brown: Born on April 8, 1902; died on December 14, 1989; interviewed by Mildred Arthrell in 1984. Mabel was born in nearby Pittsfield Township and attended Oberlin public schools and the Kindergarten-Primary Training School before receiving a bachelor's degree from Kent State University in 1939. She taught at a number of elementary schools in Lorain County and remained active after her retirement in 1961 by tutoring children, serving her church, and continuing her love of writing.

Mabel illustrated a children's book, *Jack and Laddie*, in 1934, and wrote poetry, biographies of her friends, and invocations delivered at retired teachers' meetings.



Delores Gatlin Carter (née Zananna): Born on October 27, 1919; died on August 26, 1993; interviewed by Andrew Kinsey in 1987. Delores arrived in Oberlin in 1948 from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, via Cleveland after the death of her husband, John Gatlin, in 1943. One of the first African American teachers in the area, she was a strong advocate of individualism during her twelve years as a member and an officer of the Oberlin Board of Education and her seven years on the Lorain County Joint

Vocational Board of Education. After Delores retired from teaching in the Midview School District in Grafton, 10 miles east of Oberlin, in 1984, she worked with Ohio Representative Marie Tansey and the Ohio School Boards Association to change laws regarding funding of school districts. Midview Schools named her Teacher of the Year in 1980, and the Oberlin chapter of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs awarded her its Sojourner Truth Award in 1988.



Mildred Chapin (née Locke): Born on June 3, 1913; died on September 28, 1999; interviewed by Elizabeth Thomas in 1986. Born in Oberlin, Mildred attended Oberlin public schools and the Oberlin Kindergarten Training School. For a time, she taught primary grades in the Oberlin public schools. She lived in Oberlin and neighboring communities for most of her life and married a childhood neighbor, Almon Joel Chapin, a mechanical

engineer and manufacturer of heating and cooling equipment. Mildred had a wide variety of interests and activities: She was a homemaker,

mother, licensed pilot, historian, avid bird watcher, ham radio operator, weaver, potter, amateur geologist, and piano and organ player. She also enjoyed sailing, swimming, and water skiing, and was a member of the U.S. Power Squadron. In 1994 she received the Historian of the Year Award from the United Methodist Historical Society of Ohio for her history of the First Methodist Church in Oberlin, of which she was a member.

Marianne Cochran: Born on January 16, 1937; interviewed by Priscilla Steinberg in 2003. Marianne grew up in Oberlin, graduated from Oberlin High School, and earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Grinnell College in 1959. As a child she worked in her father's store, Ben Franklin. In 1961 she helped her father open a small department store, the Towne Shoppe, and took over as manager of the Ben Franklin store. Marianne was a member of the Oberlin Chamber of Commerce and served on Oberlin's Public Utilities Commission, Recreation Commission, and Sesquicentennial Committee. She was board president of the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization (the former name of the Oberlin Heritage Center) from 1990 to 1998.



Magdalene Cox (née Jackson): Born on September 8, 1906; died on September 14, 1988; interviewed by Elizabeth Thomas in 1982. Magdalene was born and raised on a farm in neighboring Pittsfield Township. She was in the first class to graduate in 1925 from Oberlin's new high school building on North Main Street (now home to Langston Middle School). After attending Oberlin Business College, Magdalene moved away from the city in 1927 with her husband, Lafayette Cox, a pastor and alumnus of Oberlin's Graduate School of Theology. In 1936 she and her family settled in Schenectady, New York, where she was the second African American woman employed by the city's public library system. She worked there for twenty-seven years, eighteen of them as head of its Circulation Department. In retirement she continued to volunteer at the public library in Schenectady.

Lorna Marion Dudley: Born on August 13, 1896; died on December 3, 1987; interviewed by Moira Bucciarelli in 1987. Marion was born in nearby Henrietta Township and took the streetcar to Oberlin High School, from which she graduated in 1913. She attended Oberlin College for two years and graduated from William Paterson Teachers College. She taught in Idaho, Ohio, and New Jersey, where she was a special education teacher for



thirty-five years before retiring to Oberlin. In retirement, she directed the Oberlin Community Services Center's craft room program and traveled the world, venturing to China at age ninety. Her club memberships included the Plum Creek Garden Club, the Weavers Guild, and the Music Club of Oberlin.



Marvyl Fields (née Berry): Born on May 10, 1895; died on February 14, 1988; interviewed by Elizabeth Thomas in 1982. Family and church were prominent themes in Marvyl's life. She joined three generations of the Berry family in Oberlin when she arrived in the late 1890s. Her great-grandfather owned a forest in Oberlin and supplied wood to early students at Oberlin College; her grandfather was a shoemaker; and her father was one of the first African American men elected to public office in Lorain County when he became a precinct committeeman. She married George Leroy Fields and had four children and one foster daughter. At the time of her death at age 92, Marvyl was the oldest member of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Oberlin and was honorary chairperson of the Deaconess Board.



Ann Fuller (née Lackritz): Born on April 28, 1936; interviewed by Marlene Merrill in 1997 and 1998. Ann grew up in Chicago and earned a doctorate in plasma physics from Columbia University in 1966. She arrived in Oberlin in 1970, as the wife of Oberlin College's tenth president, Robert Fuller. An assistant professor of mathematics (1972–1973), she was active in the Oberlin's Women's Group and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women at Oberlin College. In 1972 she presented a paper, titled "Liberating the Administrator's Wife," to the American Council on Education. Ann remained in Oberlin with her children after she and Robert divorced, and she was employed as a case worker for Oberlin Community Services from 1978 to 2006, serving as its executive director for twenty-five of those years. In 1991 Oberlin College presented Ann its Award for Distinguished Service to the Community for her outstanding social service work and her support of the women's movement.

Lillian Adora Douglas Godette (née Fields): Born on February 18, 1917; died on November 24, 1990; interviewed by Nadia Malinovich in 1988. Adora, daughter of Marvyl Fields, claimed to be a descendent of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, and her mixed-race heritage included Chippewa and Cherokee Indian. She studied at Oberlin College for only one year due to lack of funds for tuition during the Depression.

Instead, she married Rowland Godette in 1934, raised three children, and then went back to college twenty-five years later. After graduating with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in special education from Kent State University, she taught elementary school in Oberlin for eighteen years. She served on a number of boards, including the Oberlin Teachers' Association and the Lorain County School Employees Credit Union.



Bernice Grant (née Gore): Born on November 9, 1912; died on April 22, 2005; interviewed by Charles Startup in 1985. Bernice grew up in Missouri. She joined the Women's Army Corps in World War II and was stationed for two years in the Finance Office and Accounting Department in Rome, New York before returning to Missouri. In 1948 she married an industrial engineer, Franklin Dale Grant, and moved from Missouri to Oberlin, her husband's hometown. She worked as an administrator in the Personnel Department of Oberlin College at a time when student activism was at its peak. She retired from the college in 1981, after twenty years of service.



Mildred Haines (née Morris): Born on January 5, 1899; died on February 17, 1998; interviewed by Mildred Arthrell in 1982. Mildred graduated from Oberlin High School, received a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College in 1920, and earned a master's degree at the University of Chicago in 1921. She taught at Wellington (Ohio) High School, at Bryn Mawr (Pennsylvania) College, and at Shaker Heights (Ohio) High School before her marriage to Curtis Haines in 1931. She continued to work in Shaker Heights, as a junior high school teacher, guidance counselor, and dean of girls until she retired in 1956. After retirement she developed a values program at Oberlin High School and taught in private schools in Virginia and Florida. She was active in local historical societies, and even at the age of ninety-nine took pride in telling local historians how her father, along with Henry Haas and George Bailey (Patricia Stetson's father), rescued the Union School (later called Westervelt Hall and now the Union Center for the Arts) from the wrecking ball.



Ruby May Hall (née VanAusdale): Born on December 31, 1905; died on March 24, 1996; interviewed by Mildred Chapin in 1986. Ruby May



was a lifelong Oberlin-area resident. She was the daughter of Scott VanAusdale, Oberlin's first police officer, and the wife of Raymond Hall. She worked as a clerk at Oberlin's Ben Franklin store from 1937 to 1945. She was employed by Oberlin College's library from 1951 to 1953, and again from 1965 until her retirement in 1971. Even after her retirement she continued as the head of Loan Reader Services. She also volunteered for many years at Allen Memorial Hospital's gift shop and as a Red Cross Gray Lady.



Myriam Hallock (née Johnston): Born on June 3, 1920; interviewed by Catherine Gabe in 2005 and Patricia Murphy in 2008. Myriam was born in Fremont, Ohio, and at age seven moved to Oberlin, where her mother was the director of French House, a college language dormitory. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1941. Fluent in French, she was employed as a stewardess by Canadian Colonial Airlines before taking a job in 1955 with the U.S. Information Service and serving as cultural attaché in Vietnam, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and

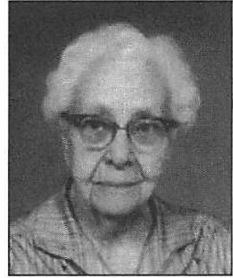
Bangladesh. She also worked for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels, Belgium, and for Voice of America in Paris and Washington, D.C. Following her retirement she lived in Washington, D.C. until she married her Oberlin College classmate, Richard R. Hallock, in 1991. Through the Richard R. Hallock Foundation she has been a generous supporter of many Oberlin organizations, including the college and the Oberlin Heritage Center. She received the Oberlin College Award for Distinguished Service to the Community in 2006.

Grace Harlow (née Martin): Born on September 26, 1900; died on August 3, 1995; interviewed by Marlene Merrill and Ann Quinn in 1984. Grace was born in Oberlin and lived in a suite of rooms in the family-owned and -operated Martin Inn, located on East College Street. She attended the Cleveland Art Institute and Oberlin Kindergarten Training School, taught for a year in Cleveland, and then married Oberlinian George Harlow II, a structural engineer. Grace lived most of her life in New York, was widowed in 1951, and returned to Oberlin in 1962 to help her sister, Betty Martin, care for her aged mother. In Oberlin she bought and operated the Carlyle Shop, still a popular source of gifts and flowers.

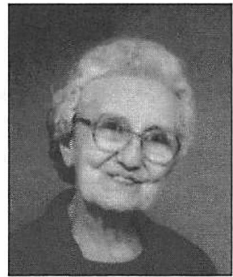
Margaret Haylor (née Green): Born on April 3, 1897; died on September 30, 1991; interviewed by Barbara Wilson in 1985. Margaret was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and graduated in 1919 from the University of Cincinnati.

nati with a degree in home economics. Shortly thereafter she came to Oberlin to teach cooking and sewing in the Oberlin public schools. During the Depression she began clerking in Haylor's Bookstore, located at 15 West College Street and owned by her husband, John Randall Haylor. Margaret was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Nineteenth Century Club, and the Oberlin Parent Teacher Association.

Hope Hibbard: Born on December 18, 1893; died on May 12, 1988; interviewed by Meg Whitlock in 1984. After her mother's death in 1895 Hope moved from Altoona, Pennsylvania, to Minnesota and New York before landing in Columbia, Missouri, where she earned a bachelor's degree (1916) and a master's degree (1918) at the University of Missouri. After earning doctoral degrees from Bryn Mawr College, in Pennsylvania, and the Sorbonne, in Paris, Hope joined the Department of Zoology at Oberlin College. At that time—1928—she was one of twenty-two women on the college faculty. She was granted tenure in just two years and remained with the college for thirty-three years in all. She was appointed to the Adelia A. Field Johnston Professorship in 1952, and she chaired the department from 1954 to 1958. She was also a trustee of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Her contributions to the community included efforts to reorganize Oberlin's League of Women Voters and to allow admission of African American women into local chapters of the American Association of University Women.



Gertrude Jacob: Born on January 21, 1908; died on August 26, 1989; interviewed by Ann Elder in 1983 and William Bigglestone in 1984. Gertrude grew up in Cleveland and came to Oberlin in 1925 to attend Oberlin College, where she received a bachelor's degree. She received a master's degree from Ohio State University in 1930, worked as a social worker for seven years in Cleveland, and then returned to Oberlin. She was employed in the Secretary's Office at Oberlin College from 1937 to 1943; at the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology from 1944 until 1966; and the college's Archives Office until her retirement in 1975. She then volunteered as an archival research assistant until 1989. The college awarded her its Alumni Medal in 1979 in recognition of her more than fifty years of service.



Helen Johnson (née Davidson): Born on January 17, 1915; died on April 18, 2013; interviewed by Dina Schoonmaker in 2008. Helen grew up on a farm in Kipton, 5 miles from Oberlin. After graduating from



the Oberlin School of Commerce, she became a personal secretary to Harvey Firestone Sr., president of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Akron. She moved back to Oberlin in 1942 to take a job at Bendix-Westinghouse Automotive Air Brake Company in Elyria as secretary to Stephen Johnson Jr., her future husband. While raising her children, Helen became an active community volunteer, serving for twenty-five years as fund-raiser and treasurer of the Women's Auxiliary for Allen

Memorial Hospital and comanager of the hospital's gift shop. She was an endowed life member of the Oberlin Heritage Center, receiving its Heritage Guardian Award in 2008 for publishing her memoir, *Times Remembered or What Happened to a Farmer's Daughter*.



Marjorie Johnson (née Witt): Born on March 18, 1910; died on July 19, 2007; interviewed by Elizabeth Thomas in 1986. Marjorie was born and raised in Wyoming and came to Oberlin in 1930 to attend college. Married to the actor Bill Johnson, Marjorie was a role model for African American youth. She pioneered modern dance and founded the Karamu Dancers in Cleveland. After receiving a master's degree in social science administration at Western

Reserve University in 1945, Marjorie worked at Chicago's Hull House, in the Charlotte, North Carolina, public schools, and at the Atlanta School of Social Work. She returned to Cleveland in 1978 to develop dance and creative arts programs for middle and elementary school children. Later in life Marjorie wrote *Moving Images of Courage: A Legacy of Dance and Groups* and received many awards, including the Governor's Award for Arts in Ohio, the Cleveland Arts Prize for Distinguished Service to the Arts, and the Oberlin Alumni Distinguished Service to the Arts Award, all in 1999.



Shirley Johnson (née Reinwald): Born on July 15, 1917; died on January 11, 2013; interviewed by Dina Schoonmaker in 2003. Shirley R., as she liked to be called, was born in Chicago, graduated from Flushing (New York) High School, and received a bachelor's degree from Antioch College in 1940. In 1947 she and her husband, Douglas, a fellow political activist, moved to Oberlin, where she spent more than three decades teaching and volunteering in

Oberlin's public schools. A champion of First Amendment rights, she was among the founders of the Oberlin American Civil Liberties Union

(later the North Central chapter) and the ACLU of Ohio. Her strong voice on various community boards and regular participation in meetings of Oberlin's Board of Education and City Council resulted in numerous awards, including the ACLU of Ohio's Founder's Award (1977); Oberlin Education Association's Community Service Appreciation Award (1984); Antioch Alumni Association's Arthur Morgan Award (1991); Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community (1995); and the Lorain County Commissioners' Good Citizen Award (2001).

Mary Joy (née Hobbs): Born on April 18, 1923; died on January 15, 1999; interviewed by Scott Skiles in 1987. Living just outside Oberlin her entire life, Mary traced her family's roots to pre-Civil War abolitionists. She graduated from Oberlin High School and the Oberlin School of Commerce. She was employed as a secretary at the Grafton Foundry and in the Oberlin office of Dr. A. Clair Siddall before marrying Bill Joy and settling into the role of farm wife, homemaker, and mother.



Mary was elected Russia Township (now New Russia Township) clerk in 1968. Her father, Glenn Hobbs Sr., had held the position for forty-two years, and she followed suit, serving for more than twenty years.

Marion Kelly (née Bradley): Born on May 19, 1917; died on July 5, 1993; interviewed by Ed Trager in 1984. Marion lived in Cleveland and Detroit in addition to Oberlin. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin in 1938 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and a minor in journalism, she was a columnist for the *Cleveland Press* (1940), the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (1956–1970), and the *Oberlin News-Tribune* (1951–1969). She moved permanently to Oberlin with her five children in 1951 after the death of her second husband, Ralph Kelly. In addition to writing, Marion became director of public relations for the Greater Cleveland chapter of the American Red Cross in 1953. In 1956 she joined the advertising agency of Gerst, Sylvester and Walsh, where her notable clients included Oil of Olay, Paas Easter Egg Dye, Colonel Sanders, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. She was named director of public relations at the Cleveland YWCA in 1959 and executive director of the Elyria YMCA in 1975.



Marie Lehti: Born on November 3, 1904; died on November 22, 1987; interviewed by Elizabeth Siess in 1984. Marie was born to Finnish immigrants and lived in Colorado and Idaho before coming to Oberlin in 1923 under the sponsorship of Oberlinian Dora Monroe. In order to pay her



tuition at Oberlin College, Marie assisted townspeople with housekeeping, entertaining, and caring for their parents. After graduating in 1926, Marie taught languages at Chagrin Falls (Ohio) High School for six years. She then earned master's degrees in public health and mental health nursing, served as a public health nurse in the army during World War II, and worked for the Visiting Nurse Association and Health Hill Hospital for Children in Cleveland. In 1977 she retired and returned to Oberlin.



Molly Ruth Ludwig: Born on June 24, 1911; died on May 2, 2000; interviewed by Carla Poindexter in 1987. Molly arrived in Oberlin in 1930 to attend Oberlin Business College and remained in the city for the rest of her life. She was "the lady in the booth" at the Apollo Theater during the Depression, World War II, and the turbulent 1960s. As ticket taker and general manager, she worked six nights a week from seven o'clock until midnight, ate dinner at one o'clock in the morning and slept

from four o'clock until noon. Despite this rigorous schedule she missed only three days of work until she retired in 1974.



Margaret Maruschak (née Paddock): Born on February 13, 1921; died on December 2, 1990; interviewed by Sheila Ives in 1982. Margaret spent most of her life in Oberlin, where she married Stephen Maruschak and raised her children. She earned a bachelor's degree from Flora Stone Mather College of what is now Case Western Reserve University in 1945 and a master's degree from Ohio State University. She was a caseworker for the Oberlin Children's Home, a teacher at the First Church Nursery School,

a teacher in the Oberlin Head Start program, and a tutor of learning-disabled children in Oberlin's public schools.



Marlene Merrill (née Deahl): Born on January 4, 1933; interviewed by Priscilla Steinberg and Ann Fuller in 2010. Marly grew up in South Bend, Indiana, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1955 from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. She moved to Oberlin in 1962 with her husband, Dan, who taught philosophy at Oberlin College and where she helped form, teach in, and direct the first Head Start program in Lorain County. From

the 1980s on, she worked primarily as a documentary editor, historian, and writer. Her writings relate to Oberlin College and geological expeditions in the West. Marly has been an active member of the town's Historic Preservation Commission, the Oberlin Heritage Center, and the Friends of the Oberlin College Library. She was instrumental in establishing the Oberlin Oral History Committee and the Oberlin College Affiliate Scholar Program.

Jane Nord (née Baker): Born on September 19, 1920; interviewed by Marlene Merrill in 2003. Jane graduated from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York (1942), and the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York (1945), where she taught art before returning to her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. She moved to Oberlin in 1949. She continued to pursue her art and earned a master's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Art and Case Western Reserve University in 1976. As an active artist and musician, Jane was instrumental in establishing the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts. She and her husband, Eric, a prosperous manufacturing business owner, also spurred the transformation of Westervelt Hall, a former public school and Oberlin College classroom building, into the Union Center for the Arts, a community center that houses art, music, drama, and dance organizations. Jane received Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community in 1996 and Case Western Reserve University President's Award for Visionary Achievement in 2013.



Marjorie Parker (née Peabody): Born on March 2, 1905; died on June 27, 1990; interviewed by Peggy Orenstein in 1983. Marjorie was born on a farm in Russia Township (now New Russia Township), 3 miles north of Oberlin. She was a graduate of Oberlin High School and the Oberlin Business College. Marjorie and her husband, Webster, owned and operated the W. E. Parker Jewelry Store at 11 East College Street in the 1950s and 1960s. She was a member of Senior Forum and of the First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ.

Carrie DeEtté Pease: Born on July 12, 1893; died on March 22, 1994; interviewed by Fran Bauermann in 1982 and 1983. Carrie grew up in nearby Pittsfield and Wellington, Ohio. After receiving her teaching certificate from Ohio University, she taught in Wellington and Ashland, Ohio, for three years. She returned to Ohio University in 1923, earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1925, taught geography and social studies, and



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coached girls' basketball in Oberlin's public schools for the next thirty-three years. She was a fifty-year member of the Oberlin Women's Club and was active in Methodist churches in Wellington and Oberlin. She enjoyed mountain climbing and was proud of the fact that she had traveled through every state in the United States as well as in South America, Mexico, and Europe.



Jeanne Pease (née Wendt): Born on December 7, 1932; interviewed by Fran Baumann in 2007. Jeanne grew up in Toledo, Ohio, attended the University of Toledo, and earned a bachelor's degree from Ohio University in 1959. That same year she moved to Oberlin, where her husband, Don, was the co-owner and editor of the *Oberlin News-Tribune*. She campaigned tirelessly for her husband, who held local, state, and national offices through the years and developed the habit of walking around Oberlin each morning to listen to his constituents.

Jeanne was also an active volunteer in the Oberlin elementary schools, Welcome Nursing Home, United Appeal, and the League of Women Voters.



Harriet Reynolds (née Decker): Born on December 26, 1912; died on August 23, 2000; interviewed by Ruth Strasburg in 1987. Harriet spent her youth in upstate New York and graduated from the University of Rochester. She earned her master's degree in religious education in a joint program of Columbia University, in New York City, and Union College, in Schenectady, New York. She came to Oberlin in 1945 when her husband, Russell, became executive secretary for the National Association of College Stores, headquartered in the city. Harriet worked as a secretary at the World Council of Churches and Oberlin College's Graduate School of Theology, retiring in 1985. In retirement she was a hospital and nursing-home chaplain for the Oberlin Area Cooperating Ministries and an active member of Oberlin's Church Women United.

Minnie Louise Rucker (née Taylor): Born in 1909; died on December 14, 1986; interviewed by Marlene Merrill and Ellen Henle in 1979 and Elizabeth Thomas in 1983. Minnie lived her entire life in Oberlin and had ties to many people who came to Oberlin on the Underground Railroad in the mid-nineteenth century. She was a licensed practical nurse and worked in private homes, nursing homes, and Allen Memorial Hospital in Oberlin. She was a member of Oberlin's Park Street Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Licensed Practical Nurses of Ohio, the NAACP,

the RSVP Senior Corps of Volunteers, and the Oberlin Women's Progressive Club.

Margaret Schauffler: Born on June 4, 1896; died on February 23, 1994; interviewed by Betty Gabrielli in 1983 and Ellen Enslow in 1986. Margaret graduated from Oberlin High School and received a degree in music with Phi Beta Kappa honors from Oberlin College in 1918, a degree in art from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1922, and a master's degree in art from Western Reserve University in 1931. She taught fine arts at Oberlin College and Ashland College, where she also chaired the Art Department. Her paintings have been exhibited at the Cleveland Museum of Art and in art galleries and universities in several states. Margaret campaigned for women's suffrage, prohibition, and world peace, following the example of Christian benevolence and social activism of her parents, founders of the Schauffler Missionary Training School (later the Schauffler Division of Religious and Social Work at Oberlin College's Graduate School of Theology). In 1988 she received Oberlin College's Award for Distinguished Service to the Community.

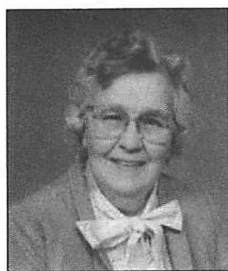


Susan Schubert (née Smith): Born on February 14, 1958; interviewed by Nancy Gray in 2004. Susan was born and raised in Oberlin. She earned an associate's degree in nursing at Lorain County Community College and worked in the Intensive Care Unit of Lorain Community Hospital (now Mercy Regional Medical Center). Susan worked as a nurse alongside her husband Eric (Woody) Schubert, a paramedic, in a rescue helicopter program. She has also worked in the cardiac catheterization laboratory at Saint John West Shore Hospital in Westlake, Ohio.

Janie Scott (née Burgess): Born on July 3, 1903; died on October 9, 1992; interviewed by Eva Schlesinger in 1985. Janie was born in South Carolina and lived in Cleveland before coming to Oberlin in 1929 so that her husband, Alvin, could continue in the family carpentry business, Scott & Son. She was active in Mount Zion Baptist Church, where she served on its Deaconess Board and Missionary Aid Society. She was also a member of the Oberlin Women's Progressive Club, which was instrumental in starting an African American recreation and social club, the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, in Oberlin.



Dorothy Smith: Born on April 9, 1908; died on February 5, 2008; interviewed by Dina Schoonmaker in 2001. Dorothy had an extraor-



dinarily long history with Oberlin College. After earning a bachelor's degree there in 1929, she worked for forty-four years in the Office of Admissions and the Office of Placement and Graduate Counseling, from which she retired as director in 1974. Her insistence on proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation led to her second career as a proofreader at the *Oberlin News-Tribune*, from which she retired again in 2002 at the age of ninety-four. Recognizing her contributions to the community, the *News-Tribune* named her Oberlinian of the Year in 1999.



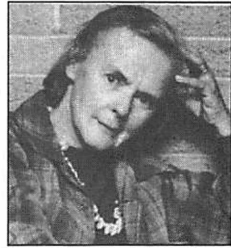
Margaret Smith (née Parker): Born on September 6, 1930; died on January 26, 1989; interviewed by Eva Schlesinger in 1984 and Carla Poindexter in 1987. A lifelong resident of Oberlin, Margaret graduated from Oberlin High School in 1948, attended Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, and received her bachelor's degree from Ashland College (now Ashland University) in Ashland, Ohio, in 1977. She was one of the first teachers in Oberlin's Head Start program in the 1960s and taught special education at Oberlin's Langston Middle School, from which she retired in 1986. Margaret also served as president of the Lorain Negro Women's Business and Professional Club, the Oberlin Women's Progressive Club, and the local NAACP chapter. She received awards for her volunteerism in these organizations and was named the YWCA Woman of Interest in 1982. A member of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Margaret served as board president of its Christian education program.



Elizabeth Spurlock (née Duvall): Born on January 30, 1918; died on May 9, 1990; interviewed by Stanley Garfinkel in 1984. Betty came to Oberlin from Virginia in the early 1920s with her mother, a recent divorcée, and five of her siblings. Her mother chose Oberlin when she was told that "colored ladies" could find employment doing general housework. Betty attended Oberlin schools and Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. She married Delbert Spurlock, who became head of conservation at the Cleveland Museum of Art even though he never went to college. After their three children finished college, Betty matriculated at Kent State University, from which she graduated with honors in 1970. She taught for two years in the Lorain County School

for the Retarded (now Murray Ridge Center) and for twelve years in the Oberlin public schools. Upon retirement in 1982 she was a volunteer tutor of children and adults.

Ursula Stechow (née Hoff): Born on February 15, 1911; died on January 16, 2008; interviewed by Syd Holodnick in 1985 and Ellen Enslow in 1986. Ursula emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1936. Four years later she arrived in Oberlin, where her husband, Wolfgang, joined the college's art history faculty. Ursula juggled school and family, earning a degree in zoology in 1942 and a teaching certificate in the 1960s at Oberlin College. She taught French and German in the Oberlin schools and was a translator of books, articles, and musical texts. She was passionate about music and animals, nurturing injured or orphaned birds and small animals before releasing them back to nature.



Patricia Stetson (née Bailey): Born on January 7, 1928; interviewed by Lisa Goodman in 1984. A lifelong resident of Oberlin, Pat attended Baldwin Wallace College (now Baldwin Wallace University) in Berea, Ohio, Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio, before graduating from Ohio State University in Columbus. She owned and operated a sporting goods store in Oberlin with her husband, Bill Stetson. An avid golfer, she was an active member of the Oberlin Golf Club, of the Allen Hospital Auxiliary, and of the Planning Committee for Oberlin's Sesquicentennial in 1982. From her work on the Sesquicentennial, Pat gained a deeper appreciation of the role her father, George H. Bailey, had played in the development of Oberlin. He built a block of buildings on East College Street using recycled material from torn-down college buildings; he bought the Union School on South Main Street to save it from the wrecking ball; and he donated part of his 104-acre farm to the State of Ohio for a roadside park at the eastern edge of Oberlin.



Elizabeth Thomas (née Glenn): Born on July 2, 1913; died on October 30, 1989; interviewed by Stanley Garfinkel in 1982, Allan Patterson in 1984, and Eva Schlesinger in 1985. Both Betty and her father were born and died in the same house, at 195 North Professor Street. Betty graduated from the Oberlin Kindergarten-Primary Training School and, in 1936, from Oberlin College. In 1942 she married attorney Phillip Thomas. The first Af-



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rican American teacher in Oberlin's public schools, Betty worked there for thirty-two years and volunteered in them for ten more years after her retirement in 1975. She was also a volunteer at Allen Memorial Hospital, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Meals on Wheels, Church Women United, the board of the Oberlin chapter of the American Association of University Women, and the Oral History Committee of the Oberlin Heritage Center.



Jennie Tucker: Born on June 10, 1906; died on January 11, 1986; interviewed by Dina Schoonmaker in 1982. Born and raised in Oberlin, Jennie traced her heritage in Oberlin to the Lane Rebels of Cincinnati. She received a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College in 1926 and a master's degree in library science from Western Reserve University in 1953. Jennie was employed for twenty years at Burrows Book Store in Cleveland and for twenty-five years at the Oberlin College library. In

retirement she worked part-time in its Acquisitions Department until 1984.



Lee Wood (née Aspinwall): Born on June 8, 1933; interviewed by Rachel Barber in 2003 as part of the Retired Teachers' Story Circle. Lee came to Oberlin in 1951 as a student in the Conservatory of Music, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees. Before graduating she married Oberlinian Walter Wood, a textbook sales representative, and they started a family. She then returned to school and taught for twenty-four years, primarily in Oberlin's public schools. She worked with all

levels of students, from toddlers at the Oberlin Cooperative Pre-School to college students as a field coordinator in the Music Education Division of Oberlin College. She was active in the League of Women Voters, the First Church in Oberlin, UCC, the Nineteenth Century Club, and the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, the latter two of which she served as president. In 2013 she moved to Iowa to be near her family.



Florene Worcester: Born on August 4, 1911; died on June 20, 1997; interviewed by Alan Patterson in 1983. Florene was born and raised in Oberlin. She entered the Oberlin Kindergarten-Primary Training School in 1929. In the same year she was in an automobile accident that resulted in complete paralysis of her left arm. Undaunted by her disability she completed her course of study in 1933, and went on to earn a bachelor's degree

from Kent State University and a master's degree from Colorado State University. She was one of the first students enrolled in Oberlin's Prospect School and later both taught in it and became its principal. After her retirement in 1973 she lived at the Jewett House and helped care for it and the other buildings that are now part of the Oberlin Heritage Center. Active in Oberlin's First United Methodist Church, she was both a teacher in and the director of its church school.

Appendix C

MEET EUGENIA VANEK

Eugenia Vanek (née Poporad) spent more than thirty years as a teacher, administrator, and researcher in schools, health care institutions and nonprofit agencies in the Cleveland, Ohio area. She earned degrees at Case Western Reserve University (B.A., 1970), Boston University (M.A., 1972), and the University of Rochester (Ed.D., 1974) before returning to her hometown of Cleveland with her husband, radiologist John Vanek. Balancing career and family, “Geni” held various administrative and research positions at CWRU’s Schools of Medicine and Dentistry and the Cleveland Clinic’s Division of Medical Education.



Upon her move to Oberlin in 1978 she became more active as a curriculum consultant and grant writer for other educational organizations, including the Northeast Ohio Multipurpose Arthritis Center, the Elyria public schools, and Kent State University’s Center for Educational Leadership. She sat on a number of regional committees and local boards, including the Lorain County Board of Health, Oberlin City Council’s Design Review Board, Oberlin Seniors of Neighborhood House Association, and the Oberlin Heritage Center. Currently retired, she splits her time between Ohio and Florida.

Appendix D

SOURCES AND CREDITS

(by page number)

- xii Selected sites in Oberlin. Base map adapted from the *2013-2014 Highway Map of Lorain County, Ohio*. Numbers positioned on the map utilize online information gleaned from the Oberlin Heritage Center's City-wide Building Inventory, the Electronic Oberlin Group, and the Oberlin College Archives, as well as personal reconnaissance. Cartography by Charles E. Dial and Sarah MacLennan Kerr.
- 1 Marvyl Berry Fields, 1928. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 2 Janet MacLennan Kerr, age 2, 1904. Courtesy of Sarah MacLennan Kerr.
- 2 Prospect School students, 1908. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 3 Three Worcester sisters in Tappan Square, ca. 1920. Oberlin Heritage Center, Worcester Collection.
- 3 Street scene, ca. 1910. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 4 Mildred Chapin, 1930. Courtesy of Judy Kelble.
- 4 Patterson 1913 open touring car, 1933. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 6 Jennie Tucker, 1926. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 7 Statue of General Giles Shurtleff, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center, Postcard Collection.
- 8 Bailey, Hall and Reighley Meat Market, 1921. Courtesy of Patricia Bailey Stetson.
- 9 Wright and Parsons Grocery Store, ca. 1905. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 9 Gibson's delivery trucks, ca. 1920. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 10 Lillian Adora Douglas Godette, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 11 Rex Theater, ca. 1920. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.

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- 11 Apollo Theater, ca. 1925. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 14 Patricia Bailey Stetson, 1946. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 14 Gayters' skating rink, ca. 1900. Oberlin Heritage Center, Gayters Collection.
- 15 Ellen Adams, 1932. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 15 Marianne Cochrane, 1955. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 16 Myriam Johnston Hallock, 1937. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 16 Carnegie Library, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center, Postcard Collection.
- 17 Bardwell House, ca. 2000. Oberlin Heritage Center, Historic House Inventory.
- 18 *The Youth's Companion* magazine, 1923. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 21 Mary Hobbs Joy, 1941. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 22 Gertrude Jacob, 1958. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 22 Marjorie Peabody Parker, 1924. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 23 Margaret Parker Smith, 1948. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 23 V-12 trainees arriving at the Oberlin Depot, 1943. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 24 Marion Bradley Kelly, 1939. *"Day by Day" with Working Mother* (2010).
- 25 Carrie DeEtte Pease as a high school staff member, 1944. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 26 Mildred Morris Haines, 1920. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 27 Oberlin's first hospital, 1907–1925. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 27 Operating room in Oberlin's first hospital, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 28 Oberlin's second hospital, 1925. Photograph by Al McQueen. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 29 Magdalene Jackson Cox, 1925. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 30 Florene Worcester and her siblings, 1925. Oberlin Heritage Center, Worcester Collection.
- 32 Jane Baker Nord and her family, ca. 1963–1964. *Investing in Community: The History and Legacy of the Nord Family of Ohio* (2004).

- 33 Dorothy Smith, 1930. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 35 Prospect School students, 1944. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 37 Interior of the First Congregational Church (now the First Church in Oberlin, UCC), ca. 1900. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 38 Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1955. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 39 The First United Methodist Church, ca. 1928–1968. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 42 Streetcar paused by the Historic Elm, ca. 1907. Oberlin Heritage Center, Postcard Collection.
- 43 Students waiting for a train at the Oberlin Depot, winter 1945. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 44 Greyhound Bus stop at Main and College Streets in the 1940s. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 44 Helen Davidson Johnson as an Oberlin School of Commerce student, 1933. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 45 West College Street businesses, 1935. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 45 Oberlin Inn block at Main and College Streets, 1934. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 47 Eleanor Roosevelt and Girl Scouts, 1942. Courtesy of Patricia Bailey Stetson.
- 48 Laurine Mack Bongiorno, 1925. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 49 Laurine Mack and Andrew Bongiorno on their wedding day, 1933. Courtesy of Sarah MacLennan Kerr.
- 51 Mary Hobbs Joy and her siblings, ca. 1928. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 52 Men sitting on a ledge outside the corner drugstore, 1941. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 53 The Hobbs farm near Oberlin, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 56 Haulk's Nursing Home, ca. 1948. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 56 Mildred Haulk Arthrell and her siblings, 1926. Courtesy of Daniel Arthrell.
- 57 Marie Lehti, 1929. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 58 Caskey House, ca. 1990. Oberlin Heritage Center, Historic House Inventory.

APPENDIX D: SOURCES AND CREDITS

- 59 Two monuments (Katharine Wright fountain; gateway commemorating women's admission to bachelors' programs), 2013. Photograph by Charles E. Dial.
- 60 Beta Gamma Sigma Sorority, Oberlin School of Commerce, 1932–1933. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 61 Hope Hibbard as a newly arrived faculty member, 1928. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 62 Marion Bradley Kelly, ca. 1960. *"Day by Day" with Working Mother* (2010).
- 62 Florene Worcester, 1933. Oberlin Heritage Center, Worcester Collection.
- 63 Oberlin Kindergarten Training School, before 1927. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 64 Charles and Margaret Adams, 1945. Courtesy of Ellen Adams.
- 65 Ohly's Corner Drug Store advertisement, 1942. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 66 Mildred Haulk Arthrell and her husband in New York City, 1944. Courtesy of Daniel Arthrell.
- 67 Pearl Harbor and related headlines, December 8, 1941. *Oberlin News-Tribune*.
- 68 Oberlin Hardware Company advertisement, ca. 1942. *Oberlin News-Tribune*.
- 70 Jeanne Ressler Bay as a teacher, 1974. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 71 Ursula Hoff Stechow and her family, ca. 1958. Courtesy of Nicola Stechow Memmott.
- 72 Elizabeth Duvall Spurlock, n.d. Courtesy of Lori and Del Spurlock.
- 74 Martin Inn, ca. 1955. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 75 Co-owner Peggy Glass in the Carlyle Shop, ca. 1935. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 76 Ben Franklin interior, 1941. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook), advertisement.
- 76 Ben Franklin exterior, 1956. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 79 First Church in Oberlin, 1908–1920. Oberlin Heritage Center, Postcard Collection.
- 80 Mabel Justina Brown, 1939. Courtesy of Pauline Freas.
- 81 Elizabeth Glenn Thomas, 1931. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 82 Janie Burgess Scott and her family, 1965. Courtesy of Patricia Knight.

- 83 Margaret Paddock Maruschak, 1939. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 83 Lillian Adora Douglas Godette, 1933. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 84 Marjorie Witt Johnson and her dorm mates, 1931. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 87 “Aunt Jemima” in Oberlin, 1940s. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 87 Centennial School, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center, Locke Collection.
- 89 Charles Adams Mosher, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 90 Florene Worcester and students, 1957. Oberlin Heritage Center, Worcester Collection.
- 92 Martin Luther King Jr. speaking in Oberlin, 1964. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 93 Police hosing Oberlin College students, 1967. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 93 Oberlin College student protesters walking to City Hall, 1972. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 94 Marion Bradley Kelly, 1955. *“Day by Day” with Working Mother* (2010).
- 94 Jeanne Ressler Bay as a teacher, 1978. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 95 Lee Aspinwall Wood, 1987. *Membership Directory*, First Church in Oberlin, UCC.
- 95 Margaret R. Schauffler, n.d. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 97 Jeanne Wendt Pease and her family, ca. the late 1980s. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 99 Sue Young Brady as a teacher, 1974. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 102 Delores Zananna Carter in a rocking chair, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 102 Delores Zananna Carter and fellow members of the Oberlin Board of Education, 1988–1990. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 104 Ann Lackritz Fuller, 1991. Courtesy of Ann Fuller.
- 105 Hope Hibbard, n.d. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
- 106 Shirley Reinwald Johnson, 2010. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.

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- 109 Oberlin Bike Path, 2013. Photograph by Charles E. Dial.
- 110 Susan Smith Schubert, 1976. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 110 Oberlin College's Crane Pool, 1941. *Hi-O-Hi* (Oberlin College yearbook).
- 112 Splash Zone's outdoor pool, ca. 2011. Courtesy of the County Metro Parks.
- 113 The 1912 Hospital Fair. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 114 Illumination night, 1949. Oberlin Heritage Center, Al McQueen Collection.
- 115 New Union Center for the Arts, 2013. *Investing in Community: The History and Legacy of the Nord Family of Ohio* (2004).
- 115 Jane Nord and her husband, Eric, receiving the Governor's Art Award, 1997. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
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- 119 Mildred Haulk Arthrell, 1987. *Membership Directory*, First Church in Oberlin, UCC.
- 120 Fran Minghetti Baumann, 1999. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
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- 122 Mabel Justina Brown, n.d. Courtesy of Pauline Freas.
- 122 Delores Gatlin Carter, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 122 Mildred Locke Chapin, 1994. *Directory*, First United Methodist Church of Oberlin.
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- 124 Marvyl Berry Fields, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
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- 125 Lillian Adora Fields Godette, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 125 Bernice Gore Grant, 1982. Courtesy of Elaine Grant Hermetet.
- 125 Mildred Morris Haines, 1994. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 126 Ruby May VanAusdale Hall, 1999. Courtesy of Donald J. Hall.
- 126 Myriam Johnston Hallock, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
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- 128 Shirley Reinwald Johnson, n.d. <www.acluohio.org/about/history/tributes/shirley-r-johnson> (ACLU of Ohio website).
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- 129 Marion Bradley Kelly, ca. 1970. *"Day by Day" with Working Mother* (2010).
- 130 Marie Lehti, 1987. *Membership Directory*, First Church in Oberlin, UCC.
- 130 Molly Ruth Ludwig, n.d. Courtesy of the *Oberlin News-Tribune*.
- 130 Margaret Paddock Maruschak, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 130 Marlene Deahl Merrill, 2002. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 131 Jane Baker Nord, n.d. Courtesy of Jane Nord.
- 131 Carrie DeEtte Pease, 1950. *O-High* (Oberlin High School yearbook).
- 132 Jeanne Wendt Pease, 2009. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 132 Harriet Decker Reynolds, 1987. *Membership Directory*, First Church in Oberlin, UCC.
- 133 Margaret R. Schauffler, 1987. *Membership Directory*, First Church in Oberlin, UCC.
- 133 Janie Burgess Scott, 1991. Courtesy of Patricia Knight.
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- 134 Elizabeth Duvall Spurlock, n.d. Courtesy of Lori J. Spurlock.
- 135 Ursula Stechow, ca. 1980s. Courtesy of Nicola Stechow Memmott.
- 135 Patricia Bailey Stetson, n.d. Courtesy of Patricia Stetson.
- 135 Elizabeth Glenn Thomas, n.d. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
- 136 Jennie Tucker, ca. 1980. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Archives.
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- 136 Florene Worcester, 1993. Oberlin Heritage Center Collection.
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